

LITURGICAL DRAMA  
IN BYZANTIUM AND RUSSIA

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This article represents a considerably enlarged and revised version of a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society at Stanford University, California, on December 28, 1960.

THE study of Byzantine theatrical practices has made no striking advance since Professor G. La Piana published his admirable survey of research in this field twenty-five years ago.<sup>1</sup> In his conclusion La Piana stated: "New elements bearing either directly or indirectly on the problem of the Byzantine theater will undoubtedly be provided by the new and rapid progress of studies of Byzantine music," and he added, "it may be advisable to avoid applying to this liturgical and homiletic development the term *theater*, which suggests features and connections which were extraneous to its spirit as well as its form."<sup>2</sup>

In considering the theater in general, a distinction must be made between the profane and the religious theater. The existence of profane theater in Byzantium has been established beyond any doubt by Albert Vogt,<sup>3</sup> and a substantial addition to his findings may be found in a work by G. J. Theocharidis.<sup>4</sup> Opinions vary concerning the religious theater in Byzantium, yet La Piana felt that there was no reason to doubt the existence of some activity of this kind in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, Samuel Baud-Bouvy has denied the existence of a religious theater in Byzantium.<sup>6</sup>

At the outset it may be useful to settle the matter of terminology. La Piana's objection to the use of the term *theater* may perhaps be removed by the use of the term *liturgical drama* which is already accepted in the study of mediaeval Western European music and theater. In order to qualify for this definition, a play must be performed in a church and in close connection with some liturgical office. In addition, the participants in a liturgical drama must impersonate the characters concerned.<sup>7</sup> Whether the impersonators are professional actors or low ranking clergymen is a less relevant point. However, if the actors are clerics, church singers, or sextons, their participation in a play, performed either during a service or between two succeeding services, represents an added justification for the use of the term "liturgical drama."

La Piana's expectation that the study of Byzantine music would provide new elements bearing on the problem of the Byzantine theater is now being realized with both indirect and direct evidence. As far as indirect evidence is concerned, Wellesz pointed out some time ago that the succession of *stichera* for Christmas

<sup>1</sup> "The Byzantine Theater," *Speculum*, XI (1936), pp. 171-211.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

<sup>3</sup> "Le théâtre à Byzance et dans l'empire du IV<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. I. Le théâtre profane," *Revue des questions historiques*, LIX (1931), pp. 257-296.

<sup>4</sup> *Beiträge zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Profantheaters im IV. and V. Jahrhundert hauptsächlich auf Grund der Predigten des Johannes Chrysostomus, Patriarchen von Konstantinopel* (Diss., Munich, 1937) (Thessalonika, 1940).

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> "Sur un 'Sacrifice d'Abraham' de Romanos et sur l'existence d'un théâtre religieux à Byzance," *Byzantion*, XIII (1938), pp. 321-334.

<sup>7</sup> The definition of these terms is accepted as it appears in: Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, I (Oxford, 1933), p. 80, and in Richard B. Donovan, *The Liturgical Drama in Medieval Spain* (Toronto, 1958), p. 7.

appears to have been arranged in such an order as to suggest the possibility of a dramatic performance.<sup>8</sup> Wellesz did not argue that the hymns represented a play, but rather inferred that a theatrical play could have developed from such an order. In spite of the relatively late date of available sources discussed in this study, there is good reason to believe that the actual use of liturgical drama may be dated even slightly earlier than La Piana's conjectural date of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In almost all earlier studies of religious plays in the Byzantine Empire the well-known passage from Liutprand is invoked as proof of the existence of stage plays.<sup>9</sup> In his re-examination of sources usually cited as witnessing the existence of theater in Byzantium, Baud-Bouvy has clearly demonstrated that the passage in question does not prove anything of the kind.<sup>10</sup> However, in discussing the references by Bertrandon de la Broquiere and Symeon of Thessalonica to the play of *The Three Children in the Furnace*, Baud-Bouvy is willing to admit that it might represent a border-line case, but he does not extend to it the term "theater."<sup>11</sup>

Neither of these two witnesses, both of the first half of the fifteenth century, can be dismissed as lightly as they apparently are by Baud-Bouvy. The pertinent passage in Symeon's treatise *Dialogus contra Haereses* reads: "If [the Latins] reproach us for the furnace of the three children, they should not congratulate themselves. Because we light up not a furnace but candles and lights, and we offer incense to God according to custom; and we represent [*sc.* in painting] the angel, and it is not a man that we send. Furthermore, we place three boys, pure as those children, to sing their canticle according to tradition."<sup>12</sup>

The elements to be noted in this reference are the impersonating on the part of the singers, which is a dramatic element, and the singing of the canticle, which is a part of the office of matins and thus fits into the accepted definition of liturgical drama. Although it might be assumed that Symeon implies the existence of a similar play in the West, it should be observed that he enumerates only technical details of the Greek practice which would not necessarily mean that they were used in the West in a play based on the same topic. Actually, in the West it was in a different play that an impersonator of an angel was lowered (see *infra*, pp. 374-5). Symeon's reference to singing presents the possibility that in some plays in the West singers sang especially composed music, probably even in polyphonic settings, rather than, as in Greek practice, in unison "according to tradition." There is nothing in his text to suggest the existence of a play dealing with the episode of Three Children that he might have known to have been performed in the West. It may be added that Symeon's description of Greek practice does not refer merely to some symbolic actions in the service,

<sup>8</sup> "The Nativity Drama of the Byzantine Church," *Journal of Roman Studies*, XXXVII (1947), pp. 145-151; see also his *History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1961), pp. 357-358.

<sup>9</sup> *Die Werke Liutprands von Cremona*, ed. J. Becker, 3rd ed. (Hannover-Leipzig, 1915), pp. 191-192. English translation by F. A. Wright, *The Works of Liutprand of Cremona* (London, 1930), p. 253.

<sup>10</sup> *Byzantion*, XIII, p. 330.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

<sup>12</sup> PG, 155, col. 113.



but describes a specific play of which there are several texts available. What makes it even more important from the point of view of a student of the history of Byzantine music is the fact that all four manuscripts in which this play is preserved contain, as we shall see, musical notation.

It cannot be assumed that Symeon was describing a practice peculiar to Thessalonica, since there exists another contemporary reference to the same play, this time in Constantinople. During his stay in the capital of the Byzantine Empire in about 1432, Bertrandon de la Broquiere went one day to Hagia Sophia to observe the service at which the Patriarch officiated. It will be shown later that the day could only have been the Sunday before Christmas. Bertrandon's text reads: "Je attendi tout le jour pour veoir leur maniere de faire et firent un mistere de trois enfants que Nabuchodonosor fist mettre en la fournaise."<sup>13</sup> There is no need to doubt the correctness of this report since there is yet a third reference to this play, apparently unknown to Baud-Bouvy. Ignatius of Smolensk, who was in Constantinople in 1389, noted that on the Sunday before Christmas he saw in Hagia Sophia "how they prepared the furnace of the three holy children."<sup>14</sup> This is an impressive accumulation of data, testifying to the existence of this specific religious play, in a time-span of less than half a century.

It seems reasonable to assume that this liturgical drama and the practice of its performance may be older than the first recorded date in the fourteenth century. The problem which arises is whether this drama was a remnant of Western influence introduced into Constantinopolitan practice during the Latin Empire, or was earlier in date. The correctness of the latter assumption has been substantiated by the Russian liturgiologist, Alexei Dmitrievskii, who thus extended the period of this practice by several centuries. In an eleventh-century manuscript of the typikon of the Great Church, Dresden, Cod. gr. 140, Dmitrievskii found a reference to the ἅγιος φούρνος, i.e. "holy furnace," as one of the items which was ceremoniously incensed by the patriarch and the emperor in the sacristy on Holy Saturday.<sup>15</sup> As Dmitrievskii pointed out, this particular ceremony of incensing the utensils in the sacristy is also mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus in the *De Ceremoniis*,<sup>16</sup> but without enumerating the items in the sacristy. Since Dmitrievskii as a liturgiologist could offer no other use for the furnace than in the play under discussion, it is this writer's belief that the case for the earlier existence of the play has been thereby strengthened. Hence it is possible to assume that the play itself is much older than the references to it in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Even so, the manuscripts in which the play is preserved with musical notation date from the

<sup>13</sup> "Le voyage d'Outremer," in *Recueil de voyages et de documents pour servir à l'histoire de la géographie*, ed. by Ch. Scheffer, XII (Paris, 1892), pp. 154-156. English translation in *Early Travels in Palestine*, ed. by T. Wright (London, 1848), p. 338. The passage is quoted in full in Baud-Bouvy's article in *Byzantion*, XIII, p. 331.

<sup>14</sup> *Khozhdenie Ignatiia Smolianina*, ed. S. V. Arsen'ev, *Pravoslavnyi Palestinskii Sbornik*, no. 12 (St. Petersburg, 1887), pp. 11-12: "V nedel'iu pered Rozhdestvom Khristovym videl'kh v sviatoi Sofii, kako riadiat peshch sviatykh 3-iu otrok," French translation by Mme B. de Khitrowo, *Itinéraires russes en Orient* (Geneva, 1889), p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> "Ὁ ἅγιος φούρνος," *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, XXIV (1923-1926), pp. 139-140.

<sup>16</sup> *De Cerimoniis aulae byzantinae* (Bonn ed.), p. 182; ed. A. Vogt *Le Livre des Cérémonies*, I (Paris, 1935), p. 171.

fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The four manuscripts known to contain this play<sup>17</sup> are:

*A* – Athens, National Library, MS 2406, dated 1453.<sup>18</sup>

*I* – Iviron Monastery, MS 1120, dated 1458.<sup>19</sup>

*S* – Mt. Sinai, MS 1527, 16th c.<sup>20</sup>

*L* – Lavra Monastery, MS Λ 165, presumably 17th c.<sup>21</sup>

A comparison of the four texts of this play shows remarkable agreement, in spite of the existence of two distinct variants in the textual tradition. One tradition is represented by the two manuscripts on Mt. Athos which have a nearly identical text. If the dating of *L* is correct<sup>22</sup> the appearance of the play in it would seem to represent an anachronism. Since in all probability *L* was copied from *I*, it does not follow that *L* corroborates the testimony of *I* concerning the attributions of certain musical parts to a specific composer. It would seem appropriate to consider *L* as a belated copy of *I* with some slight but not insignificant amplifications. Neither of these two manuscripts was available to this writer for purposes of transcription into modern notation. The text of the play as it appears in these two manuscripts was, however, published a long time ago and is reproduced in Appendix I for comparative purposes.

<sup>17</sup> This writer is obliged to Professor P. N. Trempelas of Athens, who was kind enough to inform him that he knows of no other manuscript containing this liturgical drama.

<sup>18</sup> This writer is deeply indebted to Professor Oliver Strunk of Princeton University, who answered many inquiries and supplied pertinent data, which included information about this manuscript. According to Prof. Strunk's notes, the Athens MS is a *papadiké* of 468 folios. On fol. 291 there is a colophon giving the date of writing as July 1, 6961 (1453). The liturgical drama is on fols. 151<sup>r</sup>–153<sup>v</sup>. The text of the play was published by P. N. Trempelas in his: 'Εκλογή ελληνικής ὁρθοδόξου ὑμνογραφίας (Athens, 1949), pp. 298–300. This writer is greatly indebted to Professor Richard Burgi of Yale University, who was able, during his stay in Athens, to secure a microfilm of the pertinent folios through the courtesy of Mr. Andreas A. Athanasopoulos, Curator of Manuscripts in the National Library, to whom this writer also expresses gratitude for his cooperation.

<sup>19</sup> This is an autograph of Manuel Chrysaphes. Cf. S. P. Lambros, *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts on Mount Athos*, II (Cambridge, 1900), p. 252, no. 5240, Iviron 1120. According to Prof. Strunk there is no foliation in this enormous manuscript. Prof. Strunk's reference to the liturgical drama in this manuscript in his "The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 9–10 (1956), p. 199, served as a stimulus for this writer's investigation. The full text of the play in this manuscript was published by A. Dmitrievskii, "Chin Peshchnago dīestva," *Vizantiiskii Vremennik*, I (1894), pp. 585–588, indicating lines with neumatic notation. La Piana was aware of Dmitrievskii's publication (Cf. *Speculum*, XI, p. 174), yet apparently did not realize that the manuscript contained the full text of the drama. No microfilm of this manuscript was available to this writer.

<sup>20</sup> The existence of the liturgical drama about the Three Children in this *Anoixantaron* (on fols. 215<sup>v</sup>–222<sup>r</sup>) was discovered in 1956 by Prof. Strunk, who very kindly informed this writer of it. A microfilm of this manuscript is available in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>21</sup> This is a *papadiké* described briefly by Father Spyridon and S. Eustratiades in *Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts in the Library of the Laura on Mount Athos*, Harvard Theological Studies, XII (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), p. 292, mentioning that on the last page, fol. 325<sup>v</sup>, there is a miniature of the Three Children in the Furnace. Prof. Strunk was able, through the courtesy of Prof. Kurt Weitzmann, to locate a photograph of this miniature and to provide this writer with a copy, here published as fig. 1. The text of the play was published by Alexander Lavriotis in 'Εκκλησιαστική ἀλήθεια, no. 43 (1895), pp. 345–346. This writer is obliged to Prof. Burgi for securing a photostat of Lavriotis' article from Athens. During his stay at Mt. Athos, Prof. Burgi was kind enough to examine the manuscript and locate the play, which starts in the middle of fol. 324<sup>r</sup> and ends on the lower half of fol. 325<sup>v</sup>, followed by the miniature mentioned *supra*.

<sup>22</sup> Since no microfilm of this manuscript was available, it has not been possible to ascertain whether the whole manuscript should be dated in the seventeenth century. A glance at the notation above the miniature suggests, to this writer at least, the possibility that it could be of an earlier date, unless it represents an unusually skillful hand in reproducing the ductus of the fifteenth century.

The second, and incidentally slightly older, version appears in *A* and with some abbreviations in *S*. The most conspicuous difference between this and the first version is the absence of the names of composers in the text of the play. In this respect *S* betrays its later date, since it contains an appended section in which two names appear, thus hinting at a possible dependence on some manuscript (perhaps not known at present) which could have served as a link between the version in *I* and that in *S*. Of the two manuscripts, *A* and *S*, the first represents a possible prototype especially because of some similarities in directions for staging which appear in both dated manuscripts, *A* and *I*. Although the shortest and although almost devoid of any references to staging, the version in *S* is possibly the latest, being an attempt to reconcile some of the differences between *A* and *I* which disagree at times in the choice of verses. For further study of the relationship of the manuscripts, a comparative rendering of all texts is submitted in Appendix I.<sup>23</sup> In the following analysis, the basic results derived from the study of the texts are presented with transcriptions of musical parts of the play. Transcriptions into modern notation are based only on the notated segments of the two manuscripts available to this writer, namely *A* and *S*.

If the practice of the Russian Church in the seventeenth century may be adduced as evidence to clarify an apparent inconsistency in the wording concerning the day on which the play was to be staged (*I* has Sunday of "the Fathers" while *A* has "Forefathers"), it would seem that the actual date of the performance of the play depended on the day of the week in which Christmas fell in any given year. Dmitrievskii cites the Russian rule which reads: "If Christmas fell on Monday or Tuesday, the 'Play of the Furnace' was performed on the Sunday of the Forefathers; however, if the feast fell on any of the subsequent days of the week, the play took place on the Sunday of the Fathers."<sup>24</sup> In other words, it would seem that the play could have been performed between December 16th and 22nd. In the menaia the remembrance of the Three Children falls on December 17. Dmitrievskii also pointed out<sup>25</sup> that the Patmos manuscript of the Typikon of the Great Church records the memory of the Three Children both on December 17 and on the Sunday before Christmas,<sup>26</sup> while a Sinaitic kanonarium of the eleventh century records the remembrance of the Children only on December 17 and on that date links their memory with that of the Forefathers.<sup>27</sup> On the basis of two references to the Children in the Typikon, Dmitrievskii surmised that the play itself might have been performed in Hagia Sophia.<sup>28</sup> This hypothesis is supported only by one indirect piece of contemporary evidence, namely the previously mentioned reference to the "holy furnace." Until direct evidence is found for this period, the performance of the play at such an early date must necessarily remain conjectural. As for

<sup>23</sup> See *infra*, pp. 377-383.

<sup>24</sup> *Viz. Vrem.*, I, p. 563. This is a direct quotation from a source published in 1899. See *infra*, note 43.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 596-597.

<sup>26</sup> A. Dmitrievskii, *Opisanie liturgicheskikh rukopisei*, I - *Typika*, pt. 1 (Kiev, 1895), pp. 31 and 33.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>28</sup> *Viz. Vrem.*, I, p. 597.

the actual staging of the play in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it would have been performed approximately as follows:

After the end of the morning service, when the furnace was prepared and the children were ready, the singers around the furnace sang the idiomelon Πνευματικῶς ἡμᾶς πιστοί, according to the following melody:<sup>29</sup>

MS A, fol. 151<sup>r</sup>, Mode II:



Example no. 1

Thereupon the children entered the furnace (S specifies that the children were led into the furnace) and prostrated themselves three times toward the east.

At this point S indicates the beginning of the seventh canticle (Daniel 3:26 ff.) and specifies that in the subsequent performance the verses were to be performed alternately, one by the children and the other by the singers. The same manuscript contains no additional information about the staging.

The antiphonal performance of alternate verses does not seem to be recorded in other manuscripts, except for a brief section at a later part in A. Rather than alternating verses, one encounters instructions for repetition of the sung verse by another group of singers, as in the remark "and the children [sing] the same." While A and S indicate the antiphonal alternation between the children and the singers who sing first, according to the two other manuscripts, I and L, it is the *domestikos* who sings first.

The refrain with which the singing of the seventh canticle starts is a paraphrase of the first verse of Azariah's prayer (Daniel 3:26). According to I and L, the composer was Xenos Korones and it would seem that this attribution refers to the refrain only. The reasons for restricting the attribution to the refrain only will be clear from the following musical examples containing transcriptions of the refrain as well as of the verses sung between the recurring refrain. The verses were sung according to a much simpler melody, psalmodic in character, probably traditional and in its outline similar perhaps to some of the patterns encountered in the solemn readings. The musical setting of the refrain is:

<sup>29</sup> Manuscript S has a different text and no musical notation. For the textual concordances, see *infra*, Appendix I. A *sticheron idiomelon* with the same text may be found in the *sticheraria* under December 17. Cf., e.g., Codex Dalasseni, published in facsimile in the *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae* (Copenhagen, 1935), fol. 81<sup>r</sup>, which contains an almost identical melody with only minute variants.

# LITURGICAL DRAMA IN BYZANTIUM AND RUSSIA 357

*A*, fol. 151<sup>v</sup>. Mode IV Plagal *accel.* *rit.* *accel.* *accel.*

*S*, fol. 216<sup>r</sup>. *accel.* *rit.* *accel.*

Τῶν πα - - τέ - ρων ἡ - μῶν ὕ - - περ - ὕ - - -

μνη - τε ὕ - - περ - έ - - νδο - ξε κύ - ρι -

ε ὁ θε - ὅς. νε τῶν πα - τέ - ρων

καὶ ἡ - μῶν Εὐ - λο - γη - τὸς εἰ κύ - ρι - ε.

Example no. 2

According to *A*, after the singers finished this refrain, the children (who were inside the furnace) sang the same. Thereafter the *psaltai* sang three verses from the seventh canticle, 26, 27 (the first line only) and 34–35 (of the latter only the first line).<sup>30</sup> Manuscripts *I* and *L*, instead, have verses 26, 28 (third line only) and 47. After each verse the refrain was restated in full, yet *A* reminds the singers of this fact by the incipit only.

A transcription of the verses follows:

*A*, fol. 151<sup>v</sup>. Mode IV Plagal

Verse 1:

[S: ♪]

Εὐ-λο-γη - τὸς εἰ κύ-ρι-ε ὁ θε - ὅς τῶν πα-τέ-ρων ἡ-μῶν καὶ αἰ - νε - τὸν καὶ

[S: ♪] Refrain

δε-δο-ξασ μέ - νον τὸ ὁ-νο - μά σου εἰς τοὺς αἰ - ῶ - νας. Τῶν πα - - - κτλ.

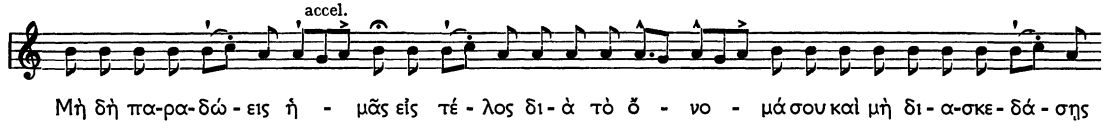
<sup>30</sup> References to verses follow A. Rahlfs' *Septuaginta, X – Psalmi cum Odīs* (Göttingen, 1931), pp. 354–358. For the verses lacking in Rahlfs' text, references are to H. B. Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint*, III (Cambridge, 1896), pp. 517–523.

## Verse 2:



Refrain as above.

## Verse 3:



Refrain as above.

## Example no. 3

At this point *A* contains an explanation, which is far from clear, of the meaning of the term *echismata*. It states (see *infra*, Appendix I, lines 66–70) that the *echismata* are the *kratemata* of Mode IV Plagal analogous to the doubling of the voices of the children. From the context in which *echismata* is used in *S* it would seem that one might be able to interpret this word in the sense of “typical melody.” The comparison with the “doubling of the voices of the children” remains unclear to this writer.

The subsequent text is a straightforward description of the order of the performance. After the end of the *echismata* (or “typical formulae” as a possible interpretation) all sang the following answer:

*A*, fol. 151<sup>v</sup>. Mode IV Plagal



## Example no. 4

Again manuscript *A* provides an interesting sidelight by stating that “for the sake of change in melody, the three children sing the following verse.” The text of this verse, although slightly different, is similar to that of the refrain. A peculiarity which appears only in this melody is that the word πατέρων contains a repetition of the last syllable in the form of πατέρω-χω-χω-χω-ων. Manuscript *S* also has this verse in the same form and with the same music, but as the last refrain in the sequence of verses from the canticle. In his edition of the text of this drama from manuscript *I*, Dimitrievskii did not indicate whether the same peculiarity occurred in that manuscript for the same text.

## LITURGICAL DRAMA IN BYZANTIUM AND RUSSIA 359

However, a remark in *I* about this verse states that it is an older version (ἕτερον ἄλλαγμα παλαιόν). While a similarity in the melodic outline of the verses of the canticle could be expected, it is interesting to note that in this particular form of the refrain the melodic outline of the final three words is the same as in the preceding “answer.” The statement about the “change” in melody refers only to the beginning of these two chants and these differences are conspicuous. A transcription, including two minor variants occurring in *S*, presents the following melody:

*A*, fol. 152<sup>r</sup>. Mode IV Plagal

Τῶν πα - τέ ρω - χω - χω - χω - ων ἡ - μῶν——, εὐ - λο - γη -

τὸς εἰ κύ - - ρι - ε σῶ - σον ἡ - μᾶς

[S]

Example no. 5

\* *S* omits one note.

At the end of this verse the climactic moment in the performance of this liturgical drama takes place—the lowering of the representation of an angel. Concerning the representation of an angel, *L* is very specific, describing it as “dressed in white with a purple orarion.” The existing descriptions of the play do not specify the method of lowering, nor the devices used for this purpose. Neither do they indicate the length of time during which the angel hovered above the children’s heads. While the Greek sources do offer some additional information on the acting of the children, there are no further references to the angel and its role in this drama. For a fuller understanding of the possible methods used for the staging of this crucial moment, some inferences may be drawn from Russian sources describing the enactment of the same scene in the Russian version of this play. These will be analyzed later. During the lowering of the angel the following verse was sung (both *A* and *S* contain identical versions of this chant), namely verse 49 of Daniel 3, followed by the musically elaborate form of the refrain:

*A*, fol. 152<sup>r</sup>. Mode IV Plagal (*S* has an identical melody)

Ὁ δὲ ἄγ - γε - λος κυ - ρί - ου συγ - κα - τέ - βη ἅ - μα τοῖς πε - ρὶ τὸν Ἀ - ζα - ρί - αν

εἰς τὴν κά - μι - νον· Εὐ - λο - γη - τὸς εἰ - κύ - - -

ρι - ε                      σω - σον η - - - - - μᾶς. Τῶν ἀ - γί - - - - - ων σου  
 ὕ - περ - ὕ - - - - - μνη - τε                      ὕ - περ - ε - - - - - ἐν - δο - ξε  
 κύ - - - - - ρι - ε                      ὁ -  
 θε - - - - - ὅς τῶν πα - τέ - ρων                      καὶ ἡ - μῶν Εὐ - λο - γη - τὸς  
 εἰ                      κύ - - - - - ρι - ε                      σω - - - - - σον η - - - - - μᾶς.

Example no. 6

The first singing of the preceding verse and the refrain must have been allotted to the singers, since *A* indicates that the children were to sing the same again because of its beauty. At this point *S* indicates the end of the seventh canticle, yet in *A* there is an additional verse. It is stated that the children sang it as well, obviously after it had been sung by the singers first. The verse is:

*A*, fol. 152<sup>r</sup> and 152<sup>v</sup>. Mode IV Plagal.

ὁ ὕ - περ - ὕμ - νη - τος καὶ ὁ ὕ - περ - υ - ψού - με - νος εἰς τοὺς αἰ - ῶ - νας.  
 Εὐ - λο - γη - τὸς εἰ                      κύ - - - - - ρι - ε  
 σω - σον η - - - - - μᾶς.

Example no. 7

After this verse, *A* contains the interesting remark that this is even better for children because of the quality of their voices.



# LITURGICAL DRAMA IN BYZANTIUM AND RUSSIA 361

As the seventh ode was concluded, the singing of the eighth canticle began. Of the *Hymn of the Three Children* only verse 57 (and a paraphrase of its text) was set to music.

152<sup>v</sup>. Mode IV Plagal.

S: [—] deest *accel.*

Εὐ-λο-γεῖ-τε πάν-τα τὰ ἔρ-γα κυ-ρί-ου τὸν κύ-ρι-ον· Τὸν κύ-ρι-

*accel.* [S: c - b-c] S: deest [—]

ον ὕμ-νεῖ-τε καὶ ὕμ-νεῖ-τε τὸν κύ-ρι-ον

*accel.*

τὰ ἔ- - - - - ἔρ-γα ὕμ-νεῖ-τε —————· Εὐ-λο-γεῖ, - - - - - τε

καὶ ὕ-περ-υ - - - - - ψοῦ-τε α - ὕ - τὸν εἰς - τοὺς αἰ - ὧ - νας

Mod IV [S: ♩]

ΛΕΓΕ πά - - - - - αν - τα τὰ ἔ - - - - - ἔρ - γα τὸν

[S: ♩] [S: ♩] [S: ♩]

κύ - - - - - ρι - ον τὰ ἔ - - - - - ἔρ - γα ὕμ - νεῖ - - - - -

τε, εὐ-λο-γεῖ - - - - - τε καὶ ὕ-περ - υ - ψοῦ - τε α - ὕ-τον·

*accel.* *accel.*

[S] ♩

εἰς τοὺς αἰ - ὧ - νας εὐ - λο - γεῖ - τε.

Example no. 8

\* The notation appears defective in *A*. Reading emended from *S*.

The staging instructions for the children are practically identical in *A*, *I*, and *L*. During the singing of the preceding verses the children were to walk in circles inside the furnace with outstretched arms and with eyes looking upward (presumably at the hovering representation of the angel). The preceding transcription of the melody represents also the last section that contains musical notation in all manuscripts of this liturgical drama. The drama itself did not end, however, at this point, and in one manuscript (*A*) there are additional lines from the canticle performed in dialogue form with exchanges between the *domestikoi* and the children. The children had to prostrate themselves three times and, toward the end, once again walk in circles inside the furnace. There is no indication as to when the children were to leave the furnace. The manuscripts indicate only that at the end of the eighth canticle a few hirmoi for ode 8 were to be sung. All of these hirmoi may easily be located in numerous manuscripts of the hirmologion dating from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries. Immediately after the play there followed the liturgy.

Manuscripts *I*, *L*, and *S* contain an additional song for the lowering of the angel, ascribed to Manuel of Gaza (or Lampadarius of Gaza). In *S* this song is preceded by another one by Angelos Neos. Since only *S* was accessible to this writer and since the highly complex melismatic character of these songs did not seem to be recorded faithfully in this manuscript, a publication of the transcriptions of these songs must be deferred until an opportunity for verifying the melodies in *I* and *L* presents itself.<sup>31</sup>

The material presented here brings to light new evidence for the existence of liturgical drama in the Byzantine Empire. From the available texts it appears that the staging of this play was not symbolic only. The singers impersonating the children did not, in all probability, remain in their singers' attire but had to be "prepared," implying the use of special costumes. The reference to the furnace also makes it clear that an object not normally used in the service had to be introduced for the performance of the play. The function of the furnace would thus have approximated that of a theatrical stage on which the impersonators perform their roles. The act of the lowering of an angel must have involved the use of some device not unknown to stagehands.

Even with four extant manuscripts it remains unknown at present whether the practice of staging this particular drama was an accepted custom throughout the Greek-speaking areas. It seems certain, however, that for the capital of the Byzantine Empire there should no longer be any question about the performance of this liturgical drama. In addition, the reference to it by Symeon of Thessalonica, suggests that it may have been performed in some of the metropolitan churches. This possibility is strengthened by the evidence from Russia, where performances of the same play took place in cathedrals, with archbishops present.

The problem of the origin of this play remains unsolved. There is no independent liturgical drama based on the same topic in known Western European sources. Only in the Procession of the Prophets can one find an episode, and a

<sup>31</sup> The texts of the appended songs are omitted in the Appendix to this study.

brief one, dealing with the Three Children.<sup>32</sup> Homilies for the commemoration day of the Three Children would have contained references to this episode and thus may have served as a possible source from which this play was derived. Yet a much more likely source of inspiration can be sought in the liturgical structure of the matins, more specifically of the kanon in which the seventh and eighth odes are based on verses from the third chapter of Daniel.

It remains a mystery why this play was not recorded earlier and why there are no manuscripts of it before the fifteenth century. The kanon with its odes was in existence as a poetical and musical form from about the seventh century on, and it is difficult to suggest at what time this particular episode could have gained prominence, or perhaps some now unknown connotation or symbolic meaning, deemed to be significant enough to result in a theatrical staging of it. Whatever the reasons, there is a distinct possibility that the play could have been practiced as early as the eleventh century, if we are to accept the "holy furnace" in the sacristy as one of the authentic paraphernalia used in the staging of this drama. But the documentary evidence is late, and to what extent the liturgical drama about the *Three Children in the Furnace*, or the *Play of the Furnace*, was practiced in Byzantium remains still a matter of conjecture.

Byzantine religious and musical practices exercised an important influence in neighboring countries. Russia stands out because of the significant role which it played in subsequent centuries, and it is natural to turn our attention to Russia in order to investigate the possibility of a Russian adoption of the liturgical drama under discussion, especially because of the reference made to this play by the Russian traveler Ignatius of Smolensk.<sup>33</sup> A survey of Russian sources is very rewarding since they contain a wealth of information, often including a thorough listing of minute data for this play. Russian scholars have been aware of the existence of this play, entitled *peshchnoe deistvo*, i.e. the *Play of the Furnace*. Among the studies on this topic, those by Dmitrievskii<sup>34</sup> and by Spitsin<sup>35</sup> should be singled out as the most comprehensive. I have relied on them for the following study of this liturgical drama in Russia.

As regards a musicological study of this play, there has apparently been only one attempt to transcribe the melodies used in this drama, yet all efforts by this writer to obtain a copy of Kastal'skii's arrangement<sup>36</sup> had proved fruitless

<sup>32</sup> K. Young, *op. cit.*, II, p. 168.

<sup>33</sup> See *supra*, note 14.

<sup>34</sup> *Viz. Vrem.*, I (1894), pp. 553–600, referred to *supra* in note 19.

<sup>35</sup> A. Spitsin, "Peshchnoe deistvo i khaldeiskaia peshch," *Zapiski Imp. Russkago Arkheologicheskago Obshchestva*, N.S., XII (1901), pp. 95–131 and 201–209. Also addenda by I. Shliāpkin, *ibid.*, pp. 132–136.

<sup>36</sup> A. D. Kastal'skii, *Peshchnoe deistvo, dlia khora i basa solo, starinnyi tserkovnyi obriad. Izložheni po sokhranivshimsia v rukopisiakh napevam*, Moscow (?), Izd. P. Iurgensona, 1909. The only reference to Kastal'skii's arrangement appears in N. Findeizen, *Ocherki po istorii muzyki v Rossii*, I (Moscow, 1928), note 338, without giving the full title, which was traced in a recent monograph *A. D. Kastal'skii, Stat'i, vospominaniia, materialy*, ed. by D. V. Zhitomirskii (Moscow, 1960), p. 269. From the biographical essay on Kastal'skii in the same volume, by Alexander Preobrazhenskii, it appears that at about the time of the publication of the arrangement a revival of the play was staged, not only in Moscow and Kiev, with enthusiastic reviews of the performances, but that this arrangement was

up to the time of this writing. To make things more complex, the only reference traced to Kastal'skii's edition implies that he used the same manuscripts from which the texts of the play had been published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Yet these published versions do not contain any reference to the existence of musical notation. Even so, musical manuscripts must have included at least some parts of the play even if no copy of what may be called a "conductor's score" ever existed. Some progress in this direction may be made by a careful search through the already available catalogues of manuscripts in various collections in Russia, as well as by an examination of the manuscripts containing the text of the play which are discussed *infra*. Thus, purely by chance, a reference to the play was found by this writer in a manuscript not listed among those discussed by Russian scholars. The catalogue of manuscripts of the Troitse-Sergeyevskaia Lavra which once housed the Moscow Academy of Divinity (Moskovskaia Dukhovnaia Akademiia—the collection is now in the Lenin Library in Moscow) lists under no. 414 a sixteenth-century manuscript containing in the hirmologion section a group of hirmoi called *peshchnie* (i.e. of the furnace) to be sung "before the Nativity of Christ when the angel is lowered."<sup>37</sup> It is possible that a few more manuscripts containing this play may be located and we can only hope that some of them will be musical manuscripts, making a musicological study of this play in Russia more comprehensive than is now possible. As things stand at present and with the materials available to this writer, all Russian versions of the *Play of the Furnace* appear in the form of a kind of "play-director's book" for the staging of the drama.

The only period for which the existence of the play in Russia seems to be unquestioned is brief, and extends from about the second quarter of the sixteenth century to approximately the middle of the seventeenth century. In spite of the fact that no later references to the production of the play are available, it is most curious to note that nearly two hundred years later, in 1841, the text of the play was copied anew in manuscript form and, strangely enough, it was copied from a printed version!<sup>38</sup>

Before surveying the known sources and the textual tradition of the *Play of the Furnace* in Russia, it may be of interest to note that Russian writers

performed outside Russia as well, at Dresden in 1911 and possibly also in Rome. See *ibid.*, pp. 33 and 35–36. There are no subsequent references to any performance in the last fifty years. It may be added that in the relatively recent Russian film *Ivan the Terrible*, pt. II (with music by S. Prokofiev), there is an episode in the cathedral in which a brief fragment of the *Play of the Furnace* is presented.

<sup>37</sup> Monk Ilariĭ and Monk Arseniĭ, "Opisanie slaviānskikh rukopisei biblioteki Sviāto-Troitskoĭ Sergievoĭ Lavry," pt. II, *Chteniā v Imp. Obshchestvĕ Istorii i Drevnostei Rossiĭskikh pri Moskovskom Universitetĕ*, bk. IV for 1878, p. 139. Cf. also two seventeenth-century manuscripts in the same library no. 740, fols. 164–167 (verses for the play) and fols. 171–172 (instructions for setting up of the furnace); and no. 741, fol. 337ff. (the full text of the Play of the Furnace). Both manuscripts described in pt. III of the same catalogue, *Chteniā* . . . , bk. II for 1879, pp. 133 and 135.

<sup>38</sup> Arkhimandrit Leonid, *Sistematicheskoe opisanie slaviāno-rossiĭskikh rukopisei sobraniā Grafa A. S. Uvarova*, II (Moscow, 1893), p. 21: MS no. 639, containing 82 folios. On fol. 67 there starts the "Chin byvaemyi v nedieliu sviatykh Praotets ili sviatykh Otets, Peshchnago dēistva." At its end there is an inscription which reads: "Siia kniga spisana s pechatanoi v Moskvĕ, pri Tsariĭ Mikhailĕ Feodorovichĕ, vziātoi iz biblioteki Moskovskago Staroobriādcheskago Rogozhskago kladbishcha. Spisal ĭakov Trofimov, v 1841 godu, genvariā 18 dnā." (This book was copied from one printed under the Emperor Michael Feodorovich, taken from the library of the Rogozhskoe cemetery of the Old Believers in Moscow. Written by Jacob Trofimov, in 1841, on the 18th of January).

developed an interest in this play, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. In some of the relevant literature a few unfounded guesses were offered about the origin and development of the play. Yet all serious Russian scholars who have investigated it agree that it is of Byzantine origin.

Although the earliest sources proving the existence of the play in Russia are relatively late, it is not only possible, but quite likely that the play may have penetrated into Russia at a considerably earlier date. Perhaps the strongest support for this assumption is to be found in the previously mentioned reference by Ignatius of Smolensk (1389). As Dmitrievskii has pointed out, Ignatius would not have mentioned the play so casually if it had been unknown to his compatriots. The coronation of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II is, by way of contrast, described in great detail by Ignatius, since this ceremony was unfamiliar to the Russian public and therefore of interest to them.<sup>39</sup>

Another indication, but by no means conclusive proof, of the existence of the *Play of the Furnace* in Russia at an earlier date was pointed out by Golubinskii, the well-known historian of the Russian Church. He found that in the *Ipatiiĕv Chronicle* there is a reference in 1146 to a person named Ivan Khaldeyevich. Golubinskii believed that this family name, uncommon in Russia, might point to the existence of the play prior to that date.<sup>40</sup> In referring to Golubinskii's statement, Dmitrievskii remarks that the term "Chaldean" need not have arisen from the play; he does not, however, dismiss Golubinskii's suggestion, but accepts it with some reservation until additional proof is found.<sup>41</sup>

While there is no doubt about the Byzantine origin of the core of the Russian version of the play, its actual setting and especially some additions unknown to the Greeks seem to point to a merger of influences in Russia, or at least to innovations in the execution of the play. Occasional elements in the Russian version may have been of Western origin, yet possible links with some forms of Russian folklore should not be excluded. There are at least three distinctly new elements in the Russian version of the *Play of the Furnace*. One consists in the introduction of the so-called "Chaldeans," who act as jailers of the Three Children. Another element is a purely theatrical trick (specifically mentioned by Symeon of Thessalonica as missing in the Byzantine version) of producing flames in order to convey as realistically as possible the illusion of fire in the furnace. The third new element is the loud noise accompanying the lowering of the angel.

No complete listing of the extant sources of this liturgical drama in Russia is available. However, on the basis of published texts in various discussions of this play, it is possible to trace at least one manuscript to the first half of the sixteenth century. All other known versions are from the first half of the seventeenth century.

The oldest manuscript containing a description of this liturgical drama came originally from the Volokolamsk Monastery from which it was transferred to the

<sup>39</sup> *Viz Vrem.*, I, pp. 593-594.

<sup>40</sup> E. E. Golubinskii, *Istoriia Russkoĭ Tserkvi*, I, pt. II, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1904), p. 378.

<sup>41</sup> *Viz. Vrem.*, I, pp. 594-595 (references are to the first edition of Golubinskii's work, published in 1881).

Academy of Divinity in Moscow (Moskovskaia Dukhovnaia Akademiia).<sup>42</sup> The Volokolamsk MS no. 410 appears to have been written under the direction of Theodosius, at one time archbishop of Novgorod, and, according to one of its investigators, the manuscript reflects the practices of Novgorod in the forties of the sixteenth century.<sup>43</sup> A substantial part of this manuscript, including the oldest description of the *Play of the Furnace*, was published in 1899 by A. P. Golubtsov.<sup>44</sup>

The Volokolamsk MS version of the play, which is the shortest of all known Russian versions, is quite obviously modelled after its Byzantine prototype. At the same time, however, it mentions the participation of the Chaldeans, who, in the course of the following century acquired a prominent role in the presentation of this liturgical drama, enhancing its purely theatrical aspects. It is also of interest to note that the same manuscript contains instructions for the participation of both the children and the Chaldeans in the vespers service preceding the day on which the play was to be performed. Instructions for this appearance of the children and the Chaldeans in their costumes in anticipation of the performance day become very elaborate in the seventeenth-century manuscripts and belong, properly speaking, to the ceremony of the archbishop's entrance into the cathedral; they have, however, nothing to do with the play itself.

If the Volokolamsk MS describes the practice of the forties of the sixteenth century, more direct evidence about the existence of the play at that time may be found in the expense accounts, for 1548, of the cathedral of St. Sophia in Novgorod. An entry for December 12 of that year lists a sum given to the "Chaldeans Novik and Kirsha" for shoes and gloves; the same entry lists sums given to three singers for shoes.<sup>45</sup> Additional entries in the same expense book mention again the "Chaldean Novik" and expenses for clothes, besides a reference to a "Chaldean cap."<sup>46</sup> While it is possible that the play may have been known in Novgorod at an even earlier date (see *infra* the discussion about the furnace from Novgorod), the first certain reference, testifying to the existence of this liturgical drama in Russia dates from 1548.

It is curious to observe that in the Russian practice, the staging of the liturgical drama of the Three Children took place during matins, as contrasted with the Byzantine practice of staging it after matins and before the liturgy. The Russian texts of the play contain a much more elaborate description of the role of the singers impersonating the Three Children and of those acting the

<sup>42</sup> A brief inventory of the contents of this manuscript appears in Monk Joseph's "Opis' rukopisei perenesennykh iz biblioteki Iosifova Monastyria v biblioteku Moskovskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii," *Chtenia* . . . , bk. III for 1881, pp. 45-46, under no. 98 (i.e. Volokolamsk MS no. 410). P. M. Stroeov's description of manuscripts from Volokolamsk (cf. D. Djaparidze, *Medieval Slavic Manuscripts* [Cambridge, Mass., 1957], item no. 187) was inaccessible to this writer.

<sup>43</sup> A. Golubtsov, "Chinovnik Novgorodskago Sofiiskago Sobora," *Chtenia* . . . , bk. II for 1899, pp. ix-xii.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239-262.

<sup>45</sup> I. K. Kuprianov, "Otryvki iz rashodnykh knig Sofiiskago doma za 1548 god," *Izvestiia Imp. Arkheologicheskago Obshchestva*, II (1861), cols. 32-54. Also conveniently assembled in Spitsin's study (see *supra*, note 35), pp. 121-122.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

role of the Chaldeans than any of the Byzantine versions of the same play. In Russian versions the title frequently encountered is "Chin egda aggela spush-chaut" (The Rite of the Lowering of the Angel) and the texts almost invariably start with a detailed description of the participation of actors involved in the ceremonies at vespers before the day on which the play was to be staged, and continue with a listing of songs which the singers impersonating the Children were to sing during the meal in the archbishop's residence after the performance. Setting aside such additional details, the oldest Russian version of the play itself contains the following text:

(fol. 46<sup>v</sup>)

....

[translation]

егда кончают прологъ, приходитъ прото-  
диаконь, и архиепископъ его благословит  
рукою, и отходит во олтарь, приемлет три  
свечи в руку и поидеть ко архиепископу.  
И халдеи за ним ведут отроки связанные,  
единъ халдей идет наперед отроку, а другой  
за ними. И, пришед, станут пред архиеписко-  
пом и поют стих: *Потицися на помощь нашу.*  
И егда пропоют, и приемлет архиепископъ  
свечи у протодиакона и дает по свечи отро-  
ком. (fol. 47<sup>r</sup>) И халдеи поведут их в пещь  
по единому, и егда внидут в пещь, и халдеи  
орошают пещь до тех местъ: *Аггелъ же*  
*Господень сниде купно со Азарьиною чадью*  
*в пещь.* Протодиакон, ставъ на месте своемъ,  
начнет кликати: *Благословенъ еси Господи*  
*Боже отецъ наших;* и отроки в пещи тож  
поют. И егда приспеет время: *Аггелъ же*  
*Господень сниде купно со Азарьиною чадью*  
*в пещь,* а конец: *яко духъ хладен и шумящъ;*  
и халдеи в те поры падуть около пещи: един  
по сторону пещи, а другой по другую  
сторону пещи. И егда станут халдеи, и дадут  
имъ по свечи в руку по выносной по  
трощаной. Един станет с правую сторону  
амбона, а другой станет по левую сторону  
амбона, а палмы у них в руках, а пещи  
потом не палят. И отроки поют песнь:  
*Благословите вся дела господня и Аггелъ*  
*Господень сниде в пещь на отроки.* И егда  
пропоют: *Благословите вся дела Господня,*  
и действуют в пещи. И егда кончают песнь:  
(fol. 47<sup>v</sup>) *Благословите вся дела Господня,*  
и потом поют: *Тричисленъя отроки.* И  
потомъ единъ халдей кличет: *Анания, гряди*  
*из пещи вонъ!* Також и всех по единому  
изводят из пещи и поставят их халдеи пред

... when they end the prologue the archdeacon  
comes forward and the archbishop blesses him  
with his hand, and he departs into the altar.  
There he takes three candles into his hand  
and goes to the archbishop. The Chaldeans  
follow him leading the children who are bound.  
One Chaldean precedes the children, the other  
follows them. And having arrived, they stop  
before the archbishop and sing the verse: *Has-*  
*ten to help us.* And when they have finished  
singing and the archbishop has received the  
candles from the archdeacon, he [the arch-  
bishop] gives one candle to each child. And  
the Chaldeans lead them into the furnace one  
by one and when they have entered the  
furnace the Chaldeans sprinkle<sup>47</sup> the furnace  
up to [the singing of]: *The Angel of the Lord*  
*came down to join Azariah's children in the*  
*furnace.* The archdeacon standing in his place  
starts exclaiming: *Blessed art Thou, O Lord,*  
*God of our fathers.* And the children in the  
furnace sing the same. And when it comes to:  
*The Angel of the Lord came down to join*  
*Azariah's children in the furnace* [text ending  
with:] *as a cold and roaring wind,* the Chal-  
deans at that moment fall down near the  
furnace, one on one side and the other on the  
other side of the furnace. And when the  
Chaldeans stand up, they are each given a  
large processional candle.<sup>48</sup> One Chaldean  
steps to the right side of the ambo and the  
other to the left side of the ambo and they  
have palm branches in their hands and  
henceforth they do not add to the fire. And  
the children sing the hymn: *Praise all the*  
*works of the Lord,* and *The Angel of the Lord*  
*came down into the furnace above the Children.*

<sup>47</sup> I.e. they threw moss-powder into the furnace to create flames, as may be seen from later lines.

<sup>48</sup> The term for the large processional candles seems to imply that it was a twisted candle which is no longer in use for processions in the Russian church.

архиепископом. И поют пресвященному архиепископу многолетье и исполите, и халдеи посторонь их стоять съ свечами и с палмами. И егда пропоют и поклонятся, и архиепископъ их благословит рукою по единому, и поклонятся все равно и отходят в олтарь.<sup>49</sup>

And when they have sung: *Praise all the works of the Lord*, they act in the furnace. And when they end the hymn: *Praise all the works of the Lord*, they then sing: *The Children three in number*. And then one Chaldean exclaims: "Hananiah, come out of the furnace!" Similarly they lead them one by one out of the furnace and the Chaldeans bring them before the archbishop. And they sing to the Most Reverend Archbishop a polychronion and "Eis polla etê" and the Chaldeans stand on either side of them with candles and palms. And when they have finished singing and bowing, the archbishop blesses each one of them with his hand and they all bow together and depart into the altar.

As rudimentary as this version of the play is, its outline is identical with the Byzantine scheme of the same play. One conspicuous omission in this description is that of the actual lowering of a representation of the angel, in spite of the fact that such an action is indicated in the title itself. Another interesting feature is an almost pantomimic role of the Chaldeans who are left with but one exclamation, yet in the course of the play are expected to perform an active role in the unfolding of the drama, up to and including the moment of the lowering of the angel.

From later Russian manuscripts, as well as from specific data in various expense accounts and descriptions of the play, it becomes clear that the act of the lowering of the angel did take place and that it was considered to be one of the spectacular features of the performance, eagerly anticipated by the assembled congregation. Even if no other Russian documents from the sixteenth century seem to be available to confirm this detail, there is a vivid description of it by an Englishman, Dr. Giles Fletcher, Queen Elizabeth's ambassador to Russia about 1589. Having witnessed a performance of the *Play of the Furnace*, Fletcher described it in his book *Of The Russe Common Wealth*, published in London in 1591, as follows:

"Another pageant they have, much like to this [i.e. the Palm Sunday procession] the weeke before the nativitie of Christ: when every bishop in his cathedral church setteth forth a shew of the three children in the oven. Where the Angell is made to come flying from the roofe of the church, with great admiration of the lookers on, and many terrible flashes of fire are made with rosen and gun-powder by the Chaldeans (as they call them), that run about the towne all the twelve days, disguised in their plaiers coats, and make much good sport for the honour of the bishops pageant."<sup>50</sup>

Fletcher thus substantiates the fact that the angel was lowered as in Byzantine practice. Additional confirmation of a much more elaborate version of

<sup>49</sup> See *supra*, note 43, pp. 251–252 (texts to be sung italicized by this writer).

<sup>50</sup> *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century, comprising the Treatise "Of the Russe Common Wealth," by Dr. Giles Fletcher and the Travels of Sir Jerome Horsey, Knt.*, ed. by Edward Bond (London, 1856), pp. 137–138.



this play, containing not only one but two occasions for the lowering of the angel, is found in Russian versions of the play from the seventeenth century. Fletcher's description, which refers to Moscow, also shows that the practice of the staging of the play was already a custom in bishops' cathedrals. Seventeenth-century documents confirm that this play was known both in Moscow and Novgorod; further documents from Vologda show that the staging of this play was a part of the annual cycle of services in that city as well. The reference to the play by Ignatius of Smolensk may indicate that it was known in that city in the fourteenth century. From the contents of the Volokolamsk MS an additional inference may be drawn for the city of Pskov. There is also a possibility that the play was staged in the city of Vladimir on the river Kliasma.<sup>51</sup> Only when a full inventory of all Russian sources containing this play is drawn up, will it be possible to ascertain how widespread was the performance of this play.

Among the Russian versions of the first half of the seventeenth century, one was printed during the rule of the Emperor Michael Romanov (1613–1645). This printed version was inaccessible to this writer, but its existence is known from references to it in the studies of Russian scholars.<sup>52</sup> Among other versions either in manuscript or in print, one should be set aside. It appears in a manuscript entitled "Skazanie dīistvennikh chinov" written about 1627 and containing a description of special celebrations in the Moscow Cathedral of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary (Uspenskii Sobor). This is not a full text of the play but a summary, and its text is even shorter than the previously analyzed version in the Volokolamsk MS. The text of the "Skazanie" was published in 1774 and since its content does not contribute substantially to this study, this version shall be ignored.<sup>53</sup>

An important version is preserved in MS no. 1100 in the collection of the Academy of Divinity of St. Petersburg (since 1919 its holdings have been incorporated into the Leningrad Public Library yet maintained as a separate collection with its own numbers). Since this manuscript seems to have been written in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, it antedates the most elaborate versions and thus represents a transitional stage between the version in the Volokolamsk MS and later ones. The text of the play in this manuscript has been published by Golubtsov.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Viz. Vrem.*, I, p. 598, note 3.

<sup>52</sup> "Chiny sentiābrīa i, nachala indikta, chin peshchnago dīistva i chin kak voskhodit Svīatitel' na vospominanie Strashnago Suda," printed in Moscow, no date, in 4<sup>o</sup>. The text of the *Play of the Furnace* was reprinted in K. T. Nikol'skii's *O sluzhbakh russkoī tserkvi, byushikh v prezhnikh pechatnykh bogoslužhebnykh knigakh* (St. Petersburg, 1885), pp. 191–200. Nikol'skii's book was inaccessible to this writer. This reference is taken from Spitsin's study, p. 95, note 4. Dmitrievskii did use the printed version, cf. *Viz. Vrem.*, I, p. 562.

<sup>53</sup> *Drevniia Rossiiskaia Vivliofika*, ed. by N. Novikov, VI, pp. 185–186 (This writer had access to only the second edition, Moscow, 1788).

<sup>54</sup> See *supra*, note 43, pp. 247–251 in the note below the main text, and pp. xv–xvii of the Preface. This is a manuscript which Krasnosel'tsev had in his hands and which he assumed dated from the beginning of the sixteenth century (cf. "O peshchnom dīistvīe," *Russkii Filologicheskii Vīestnik*, XXVI [1891], pp. 119–120, and his paper read in January 1890 and published in *Trudy Vos'mago Arkheologicheskago S'ezda*, II, pp. 34–37). In his article Dmitrievskii follows Krasnosel'tsev's dating. Golubtsov has conclusively proven that the manuscript was of later date.

Finally, two manuscripts are known to contain a highly elaborate version of this play. They are: MS no. 695, formerly in the Synodal Library (now in the Historical Museum in Moscow), written around 1638, and MS no. 1147 of the Academy of Divinity in St. Petersburg (now in the Leningrad Public Library), written before 1645. Both of these versions are available in print.<sup>55</sup> Since there is a distinct possibility that additional manuscript sources containing the text of the play may be uncovered in Russian libraries, the list of manuscripts given above should not be considered as complete.

In the following discussion only the most pertinent points will be considered in order to gain a perspective of the developments in the staging of the play as compared with the Byzantine prototype. It is sufficient to glance at relevant entries in the preserved records of expenses of the cathedral churches, the Uspenskii Sobor in the Moscow Kremlin, St. Sophia in Novgorod and that in Vologda, to realize how much importance was attached to the most minute details during the preparations for the staging of the Russian version of the *Play of the Furnace*.<sup>56</sup> The sheer number of people involved in the preparatory stages for the play and the various paraphernalia kept on hand, indicate how elaborate the performance was as it was given in Russia at that time. The fantastic amount of stag-horn moss-powder<sup>57</sup> used as a pyrotechnical device for the production of flames must have presented a truly spectacular scene for the assembled populace. It is no wonder that even the Emperor Michael Romanov attended these performances almost every year,<sup>58</sup> although the play remained the same in content.

The actual preparations for the performance of the play started on Wednesday preceding the Sunday of the Fathers (or the Sunday of the Forefathers if Christmas fell on a Monday or Tuesday), when the large candelabra had to be taken down.<sup>59</sup> On Saturday morning movable objects and the ambo in front of the central doors of the altar were removed and the furnace was placed there. In a manuscript which seems to have been some kind of manual with instructions for bell-ringing, there are some indications for the preparation of the furnace. Among other things, it is suggested that when the furnace is in place inside the church, the sexton should enter the furnace and have the angel lowered to make sure that the angel comes down at the right place above the children's heads.<sup>60</sup> The numerous candlesticks and other decorations had to be put in the appropriate places before the beginning of vespers. The impersonators of the

<sup>55</sup> The version of the Moscow MS was actually printed twice and both times incorrectly quoted as being from MS no. 490. Novikov published it in his *Drev. Ross. Vivil.*, VI, pp. 363–390 and Nikol'skiĭ in his *O sluzhbakh* ..., pp. 191–213. The Leningrad manuscript is the principal document used in Golubtsov's edition (see *supra*, note 43) where the play appears on pp. 61–67. For the dates of both manuscripts see Golubtsov's preface.

<sup>56</sup> See *infra*, Appendix II, pp. 383–385.

<sup>57</sup> Called *plaun* or *plakun* in Russian sources, its Latin name is *Lycopodium clavatum*. See the entry under the Latin name in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XIth ed., 17 (Cambridge, 1911), p. 153.

<sup>58</sup> P. Stroev, *Vykhodi Gosudarei Tsarei i velikikh kniaziei Mikhaila Feodorovicha, Aleksia Mikhailovicha, Feodora Aleksievicha (1632–1682)* (Moscow, 1844), pp.: 25 (for the year 1633), 38 (for 1634), 43 (for 1636), 56 (for 1637), 71 (for 1638), 80 (for 1639).

<sup>59</sup> Golubtsov, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>60</sup> *Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka*, III (St. Petersburg, 1876), col. 40. See also Spitsin's study, p. 116.

Three Children and the two Chaldeans together with their instructor participated as acolytes at vespers and accompanied the archbishop during his ceremonial entrance into the cathedral and his retirement after the vespers ended. Such an action obviously represented a build-up toward the actual performance of the *Play of the Furnace* on the next morning.

The morning service proceeded normally up to the end of the sixth ode of the kanon. According to the Novgorod *ordo* of the play, after the end of the prologue the protopresbyter and the priests sang nine verses together with the two choirs. The first eight verses, all of which were paraphrases of the seventh biblical canticle, were sung alternately by the two groups without any repetition, while the ninth verse was sung by all together. After the third verse the deacons came out of the altar area and started lighting the candles around the furnace, but did not enter it. At the beginning of the seventh verse, the children's instructor asked the archbishop, who sat on his throne facing the altar, for a blessing and permission to bring the children out of the altar. At the assigned time, after the end of the ninth verse, the children, bound with a kind of towel, left the altar area and, escorted by the Chaldeans, walked toward the archbishop's seat. On their way, as they passed behind the furnace, they stopped and a dialogue between them and the Chaldeans ensued. The latter threatened the children with torture in the furnace. The children, taking turns, replied that they were not afraid and that their God was mighty enough to save them. After this interlude, the children were brought before the archbishop's seat and, after a highly elaborate series of bows and the singing of a verse in which they implored the archbishop's help, they were each given a candlestick with three candles. As the children were about to be escorted into the furnace there was another dialogue, between the Chaldeans alone, the substance of which was that, since the "emperor's children" refused to obey the orders of the emperor of the Chaldeans and worship the golden calf, they were to be thrown into the furnace to be burned. One by one each of the children was escorted into the furnace and the door was closed. At that moment a person selected for this particular duty would crawl underneath the furnace with a brazier of burning coal.

The archdeacon thereupon ascended a special place prepared for him and started singing the refrain of the seventh canticle. It is interesting to note that the deacon was always the first to sing the new text of all the subsequent verses which were repeated after him either by the children or by the choirs, left and right, or by both, thus giving an impression of triple antiphony. This careful indication of the fact that the archdeacon was the one to announce the text and probably the melody of the verses, implies a procedure known as the "lining out" of each of the verses or stanzas prior to their being sung by the choir. Such a procedure appears quite natural in a semiliterate environment and, unless we are misunderstanding his function, gives the archdeacon the appearance of a "play-director."

As the verses of the seventh ode were sung, the Chaldeans walked around the furnace with bags in the form of powder horns and slowly sprinkled the powder, made from dried stag-horn moss, onto the brazier underneath the furnace. The

powder is said to have created flames giving a realistic touch to the staging of this drama. As the last verse of the prescribed hymn was sung, which actually mentioned the soaring flames, the Chaldeans became more active in spreading the moss-powder so that the impression of a flaming curtain separating the children from the viewers must have been produced. Although the flames were not supposed to be dangerous, there are records of people having been burned.<sup>61</sup>

At the appropriate moment, the sexton secured the archbishop's blessing to perform his part in the play, and just as the deacon lined out the text *The Angel of the Lord came down to join Azariah's children and turned away the fiery flames from the furnace as a fresh breeze blowing*, the sexton had the angel descend from the altar area and hover above the children's heads. The descent of the angel was accompanied by a loud noise (unfortunately, we do not know how this was produced). In the meantime, the assisting deacons took away the powder horns from the Chaldeans who, simultaneously with the angel's descent and the noise, prostrated themselves. At that moment the deacons surrounded the Chaldeans with flames. This action required considerable skill and the Novgorod *ordo* explicitly mentions that only those deacons who are skillful enough could undertake this particular action.

While the children in the furnace repeated the verse and lighted up three candles in the angel's diadem, the Chaldeans rose and took off their Chaldean caps, placing them on the palm branch which each of them held. At the end of the verse another dialogue between the Chaldeans took place, in which they commented on having at first seen three children inside the furnace, but now there were four. The fourth person inside the furnace, one of the Chaldeans remarked, had the appearance of the Son of God. Admitting defeat, the Chaldeans were each given one of the large processional candles and they stood beside the furnace during the succeeding action. During the singing of a few of the subsequent verses the children walked in circles inside the furnace holding on to the angel. There were specific instructions that Hananiah was to hold the right wing, Azariah the right leg and Mishael the left wing of the angel as they ceremoniously sang their verses in an action which also formed part of the Byzantine version of the play. According to the Novgorod version, during the singing of the eighth ode, there was another lowering of the angel accompanied by another loud noise which caused the Chaldeans to fall on their knees. During the singing of the last verse of the eighth ode the angel slowly disappeared overhead. After the singing ended the Chaldeans requested a blessing from the archbishop for releasing the children from the furnace. They opened the door and with a series of exclamations led each of the children in front of the archbishop where the children sang an acclamation to him and then returned to the altar.

It is of interest to note that the reading of the Gospel in the course of the remainder of the matins, which proceeded next, took place, according to the

<sup>61</sup> See the records from Vologda for 1626, published by N. I. Suvorov in *Izvēstiia Imp. Arkheologicheskago Obshchestva*, II (1861), col. 240 and note for December 18.

Novgorod *ordo*, inside the furnace and that the impersonators of the Three Children entered the furnace together with the priest who read the Gospel, while the two Chaldeans stood on either side as during the play itself. This curious use of the furnace as an ambo helps to explain some points to be discussed *infra*. After the end of the morning service the archbishop was escorted by the children and the Chaldeans to his quarters and the singers remained there to entertain the archbishop and his guests during the meal when the singers sang some of the *stichera* of the day. The Three Children, however, were expected to sing only the verses "of the furnace."

From the numerous references to this play and the necessary preparations and expenses involved, one may form an estimate of the reimbursements which the singers received for their participation in the play. Curiously enough, the only true actors and those who had to expose themselves to the greatest risks, the Chaldeans, received the smallest amount in the distribution of fees. Perhaps their reward was that they were allowed to wear their costumes for some time after the play. Since it is probable that the role of the Chaldeans was assigned to itinerant actors, known in Russia as *skomorokhi*, it is no wonder that they indulged in ludicrous jokes, sometimes even in unbecoming behavior during the days between the performance of the play and Epiphany when they were supposed to be cleansed by jumping into the river.<sup>62</sup> Fletcher has recorded the wild forays of the Chaldeans into the streets of Moscow, but he was seemingly unaware of the fact that numerous complaints poured in from the citizens of Moscow about scorched beards of merchants and goods strewn in the streets after the passage of the Chaldeans through some of the city quarters.

Concerning the singing of the children, there are good reasons to believe that it may have been polyphonic. Even if we have no proof of this for the sixteenth century, by the seventeenth it surely must have acquired some polyphonic features. Evidence for the existence of polyphony may be found in at least one of the scripts for the play indicating what kind of singer was to impersonate each of the children. Mishaël was to be sung by a *vershnik* (literally the highest in pitch), a term which is interpreted by Russian scholars as "descant." Azariah was to be a *nizhnik* (the lowest in pitch) or a second alto, while Hananiah was to be a *demestvennik*, a term which implies knowledge of a special type of chant requiring great skill, in a range usually considered as the first alto.<sup>63</sup> In the absence of Russian musical manuscripts which might have contained some setting for the music of the *Play of the Furnace*, the only available evidence for the polyphonic singing of the children may be found in an example given by Findeizen.<sup>64</sup> It is a verse sung by the children prior to their entrance into the furnace as they implored the archbishop for his help. This example reads:

<sup>62</sup> P. O. Morozov, *Ocherki iz istorii russkoï dramy XVII-XVIII stolētiū* (St. Petersburg, 1888), p. 43, quoting Olearius' comparison of the Chaldeans with the German *Fastnachtsbrüder*.

<sup>63</sup> See a note by D. V. Razumovskiĭ in "Materialy dliā arkheologicheskago slovariā," *Drevnosti-Trudy Moskovskago Arkheologicheskago Obshchestva*, II (1869-1870), pp. 8-9.

<sup>64</sup> *Ocherki po istorii muzyki v Rossii*, I, p. 281, without any indication of the source, but presumably from Kastal'skiĭ's edition (see *supra*, note 36).



Example no. 9

If the introduction of the Chaldeans and of the polyphonic singing of the children represented innovations due to Western influence, the theatrical trick of the descending angel is recorded in Byzantine versions of this play.<sup>65</sup> Yet the technical refinements in the use of pulleys or some other device in the Russian performances could just as easily have been another of the imported elements, as may also have been the case with the noise accompanying the angel's descent. It is sufficient to recall the vivid report of Bishop Avrami of Suzdal,<sup>66</sup> one of the Russian emissaries to the Council of Florence in 1438–1439. Judging by his descriptions of some theatrical tricks seen in Lübeck and in Florence, especially in the latter city, it is tempting to propose that the staging of the descent of an angel with the accompanying thunderclap as well as the use of fire may have been Italian ingredients which were incorporated into the *Play of the Furnace*. This assumption becomes particularly plausible in view of the fact that when in 1478 Ivan III married Zoe Palaeologina, the niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Zoe, who had found refuge in Italy, brought Italian artisans with her to Russia. An Italian architect, Ridolfo Fioravanti of Bologna (nicknamed Aristotle because of his erudition), arrived in Russia in 1475 and was in charge of the construction of the Cathedral of the Dormition (Uspenskiĭ Sobor).<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Chronologically, however, Western references to that trick seem to antedate the earliest Byzantine sources. Cf. Young, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 245 and 479–480 citing a document from Parma of 1417. See also Allardyce Nicoll, *Masks, Mimes and Miracles* (London, 1931), p. 207 and the sources listed there.

<sup>66</sup> Morozov, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–33. While the description of a scene in Lübeck sounds more like that of a puppet theater (text in *Drev. Ross. Vivil.*, VI, p. 32), the plays seen in Florence (cf. *ibid.*, XVII, pp. 178–185) may be traced to specific authors. There is a German translation of the complete text of Avrami's description of two plays seen in Florence, published by Alexander Wesselofsky "Italienische Mysterien in einem russischen Reisebericht des XV. Jahrhunderts," *Russische Revue*, X (1877), pp. 425–441. Morozov noted that the Russians were fascinated by these descriptions and copied them frequently; he was able to record nine extant manuscript versions of Avrami's account of things seen abroad.

A Soviet musicologist, Yuri Keldysh, was perhaps the first to draw the parallel between the lowering of the angel as described by Avrami and the similar scene in the *Play of the Furnace*. See his *Istoriia russkoĭ muzyki*, pt. I (Moscow-Leningrad, 1948), pp. 75–76. However, Keldysh restricted himself to only this one point ignoring the other points discussed here.

<sup>67</sup> I. M. Snegirev and A. Martynov, *Moskva*, II (Moscow, 1873), pp. 80–81; see also S. V. Bezsonov's remarks in *Istoriia Moskvy*, I (Moscow, 1952), p. 108. It would have been surprising that, as an architect, Fioravanti would not have known the work of Filippo Brunelleschi, who, according to Vasari (see *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, I [New York, 1913], pp. 293–296) constructed in Florence platforms which could have been lowered or raised inside a church for mystery plays. For a modern reconstruction of Brunelleschi's platform see Silvio D'Amico, *Storia del teatro drammatico*, I (Milan, 1958), pl. 154. It is curious, indeed, to see Fioravanti's name linked with the cathedral in which the play was later performed.

Avrami's description of the staging of a mystery play of the Annunciation in Florence<sup>68</sup> contains a number of elements that we have encountered in the *Play of the Furnace*. Among the similarities to be observed, Avrami's description of the prophets reading their prophecies and quarrelling among themselves, calls to mind the role of the Chaldeans which also included a comical element. The staging of the angel's descent was much more complex in Florence, since Gabriel was impersonated by a live person, but this too, as in the Russian play, was accompanied by a loud noise imitating thunder. In Florence the staging included also a most elaborate lighting system, consisting according to Avrami, of one thousand candles. He also mentions the flames which soared through the church in the course of a play, but did not harm anyone. In view of these correspondences, it would be difficult to discard the possibility of an Italian influence in the elaboration of the *Play of the Furnace*. If our assumptions are correct, we may propose the hypothesis that the *Play of the Furnace*, which was clearly of Byzantine origin, may have found its way into Russia through two different channels. One channel would have been a direct transmission prior to the fifteenth century, since Ignatius of Smolensk implies that he was familiar with the play. The other channel would have been the arrival in Russia of a Byzantine princess from Italy. She may have been instrumental in developing the theatrical side of the play at a time when the report of Bishop Avrami of Suzdal must have aroused in Russia interest in the wonders of Italian theatrical practices. Since the new Russian princess had lived in Italy and could have been familiar with some of these practices, and since she did bring with her Italian artists and artisans, the Byzantine play could have found a new revival with elements that had been unknown in the earlier tradition as described by Symeon of Thessalonica. The latter, we may recall, made the point that the Greeks did not use a live person to impersonate the angel but only a representation, and that they did not light a fire in the furnace.<sup>69</sup> Since Symeon was writing but a short time before the council of Florence, he may well have been referring to the staging of mystery plays in that and other Western cities when he mentioned the live impersonation of the angel.

While the exact time of the introduction of the *Play of the Furnace* into Russia remains unknown, the performance of this liturgical drama comes to an abrupt end by the middle of the seventeenth century, very likely by 1648. The last references to the play in expense accounts date from 1645. In 1649 the Russian Church began manifesting a hostile attitude toward music, and it is known that within a year the Patriarch Joseph ordered all musical instruments to be burned publicly on a pyre in Moscow.<sup>70</sup> The troubled period which the Russian Church experienced under the Patriarch Nikon probably did not witness the staging of this liturgical drama although some other "actions" like the

<sup>68</sup> According to Wesselofsky, there are good reasons to believe that it may have been a play written by Feo Belcari whose works have frequently been reprinted. Cf. Alessandro D'Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, I, 2nd ed. (Turin, 1891), pp. 245-260.

<sup>69</sup> See *supra*, note 12.

<sup>70</sup> Findeizen, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161; see also Tamara Livanova's *Ocherki i materialy po istorii russkoi muzykal'noi kul'tury*, I (Moscow, 1938), p. 50.

procession on Palm Sunday, remained in use and were abolished only in the time of Peter the Great. Yet if the play was not performed in the second half of the seventeenth century, its memory was reflected in a number of representations of the scene of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace. It is true that all such representations need not have been derived from the play, but when the Chaldeans are included, a connection with the play appears probable. One such example may be seen in one of the reliefs on the cathedral door in Pskov,<sup>71</sup> made in 1659 (fig. 2). Although this is a rather crude relief lacking in detail, the angel and the children as well as the Chaldeans are clearly represented.

An object which appears to have been a furnace used in the Play of the Three Children is still in existence. The discussion that has taken place among Russian scholars as to whether this object was an ambo or a furnace intended for the play has not invalidated the latter alternative.<sup>72</sup> Actually the text of the Novgorod *Chinovnik* suggests that the very same object could have satisfied both functions and might have been used both as an ambo and as a furnace. This furnace, which up to 1860 was in the Novgorod cathedral, was transported in that year to the Imperial Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg. At the end of the nineteenth century it appeared among the exhibits of the Museum of Alexander III,<sup>73</sup> now known as the Russian Museum in Leningrad.

There are numerous reproductions of this furnace. The earlier ones are based on a drawing by Solntsev which appeared in the lavish album *Drevnosti Rossiiskago Gosudarstva*.<sup>74</sup> Almost all reproductions that have appeared in the last sixty years seem to be based on two photographs (figs. 6 and 7) which were probably taken in the museum at the end of the last century. Judging by these photographs, the furnace, in spite of its inflammable appearance, has not been seriously damaged by fire. It is, of course, possible that it underwent some slight restoration prior to being exhibited. Basing their opinions on a reference to the acquisition of a new and handsomely decorated ambo for the cathedral of

<sup>71</sup> See Spitsin's study, p. 203, fig. 48 (here published as fig. 2). The representation of the furnace differs markedly from the object assumed to represent an authentic furnace to be discussed presently. The relief, however, is not a simple illustration of the biblical episode since the persons on either side of the furnace represent Chaldeans, who are lacking in normal depictions of this scene. More convincing in its relationship to the play is a miniature from the so-called "Godunov Psalter" (on the same page in Spitsin's study, fig. 49) in which the caps worn by the children and the Chaldeans, though primitively drawn, bear a strong resemblance to the descriptions in the inventories discussed in Appendix II.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. N. A. Artleben's contribution to "Materialy dliā arkheologicheskago slovariā," *Drevnosti*, III (1873), pp. 3-7. The final word in this discussion belongs to Spitsin, who discussed whatever was known about Russian ambos of the sixteenth century. (pp. 111-114 and 204-207), and published representations from two miniatures of an ambo in Moscow (fig. 10 on p. 113 and fig. 52 on p. 205). The history of ambos in Russia was also discussed by Golubinskiĭ, *op. cit.*, I, pt. II, pp. 231-239. He did not accept the identification of the Novgorod object as a "furnace" (p. 235, note 1). Golubinskiĭ also pointed out that, apparently, after 1667 no new ambos of such elaborate shape were built and that older ones were perhaps destroyed. An almost identical statement on the history of the ambo in Russia may be found in *Pravoslavnaia Bogoslovskaiā Entsiklopediā*, I (Petrograd, 1900-1904), cols. 576-581, s.v. "amvon" (article written by Aleksandr V. Petrovskii), esp. col. 580.

<sup>73</sup> See the catalogue *Obozrēnie Otdēleniā Khristianskikh Drevnostei v Muzei Imperatora Aleksandra III* (St. Petersburg, 1898), pp. 75-76 (description by M. P. Botkin) listing contents of the exhibition hall no. 18. For the date of the removal of the furnace from Novgorod to St. Petersburg, cf. N. Kostomarov, *Ocherk domashnei zhizni i nraov velikorusskago naroda*, 3rd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1887), p. 219.

<sup>74</sup> *Drevnosti Rossiiskago Gosudarstva*, VI (Moscow, 1853), pls. 27-29.



Novgorod in 1533, all Russian scholars who have described this furnace take it for granted that this object is the ambo referred to.<sup>75</sup> If we accept this identification, the earliest recorded date for the performance of the play in Russia may be moved back to 1533 thus bringing us closer to the period when, as we have suggested, certain spectacular elements of the drama may have been introduced from Italy.

In its present condition the preserved furnace shows great wear, and a number of decorations are missing from the three upper rows of icons. Below these three rows, the lowest tier consists of figures assumed to represent various saints, which enclose an empty space, such as could have been used to introduce the brazier full of burning coal under the furnace. The figures are represented in the posture of caryatids. This element is foreign to Russian art of the sixteenth century, and, in the opinion of one Russian scholar, it is an importation, probably from Lithuania.<sup>76</sup> The link with Italy and Western practices in general appears to offer a more plausible explanation, yet, not being an expert in this field, this writer will refrain from further speculations.<sup>77</sup>

The evidence presented *supra* has shown that in some of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, specifically the Greek and Russian, there were performances of religious plays inside the churches. While additional study will be needed to to elucidate some questions about plays based on different topics, the existence of the *Play of the Furnace* has been demonstrated: it was unquestionably a liturgical drama with all the elements pertaining to a theatrical stage. If our present knowledge of the music that formed a part of these plays remains limited to only a few examples, we may only hope that in the not too distant future we may learn more about this hitherto unexplored aspect of the religious music of Eastern Christianity.

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#### APPENDIX I

This Appendix contains a synoptic scheme of the versions of the *Play of the Furnace* as found in three Greek manuscripts, Iviron no. 1120, Athens no. 2406, and Sinai no. 1527. Since the version of the Lavra MS is practically identical with that of Iviron MS, it has been omitted from the table, although its variant readings are given in the commentary. Unless otherwise indicated, the text of *L* is the same as that of *I*.

In using the following comparative table, the reader should bear these points in mind:

<sup>75</sup> *Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisei*, VI, p. 291.

<sup>76</sup> This is suggested by Shliāpkin in his note added to Spitsin's study, p. 135.

<sup>77</sup> Among twentieth-century publications it is worth mentioning V. M. Metallov's essay "Na pamiāt'o peshchnom diēstvie," *Sviētilnik*, no. 4 for 1914, pp. 1–6, with a transcription of a hymn from the service following the *Play of the Furnace*. The romantic essay by bishop Trifon (*Sviētil'nik*, nos. 4–5 for 1913, pp. 19–24) includes a modern reconstruction of the performance here appended as fig. 3. It is not unlikely that this drawing may represent an actual staging under Kastal'skiĭ. Of the later references, the most extensive and comprehensive (though it does not contribute any new interpretations, documents, or ideas) is that of V. Vsevolodskii-Gerngross, *Istoriia russkogo teatra*, I (Leningrad-Moscow, 1929), pp. 242–253, 270–271, and 282.

a. Blank spaces in a line or between the lines indicate absence of a text which otherwise appears in at least one of the parallel vertical columns.

b. Horizontal lines in the place of text indicate that the text of that line in the given manuscript is identical with that already printed to the left of that column. For instance, a horizontal line in the place of text for line 6 in the column containing the version of MS *A* means that the text in *A* is the same as that for the same line in MS *I*.

c. The vertical lines placed alongside the text on the left-hand side of a column indicate that the text of the lines thus marked contains musical notation. Indications for *I* have been taken from Dmitrievskii's article (see *supra*, note 19).

IVIRON	ATHENS	SINAI	Lines
Ἀκολουθία ψαλλομένη	Ἀκολουθία ψαλλομένη	Ἀκολουθία τῆς καμίνου.	1
τῇ κυριακῇ τῶν ἁγίων	τῇ κυριακῇ τῶν ἁγίων		2
πατέρων πρὸ τῆς Χρι-	προπατόρων εἰς τοὺς		3
στοῦ γεννήσεως ἡ(ο)ι	ἁγίους τρεῖς παῖδας		4
τῆς καμίνου διάταξις.	τοὺς ἐν καμίνῳ.		5
Μετὰ τὸ τέλος τοῦ ὄρ-			6
θρου τῆς καμίνου εὐ-			7
τρεπισθείσης καὶ τῶν			8
παίδων ὁμοίως[ἐν ἐν-	καὶ τῶν		9
δύμασι λευκοῖς]οἱ ψάλ-	παίδων εὐτρεπισθέντων.		10
ται περὶ τὴν κάμινον		ψάλουν	11
ψάλλουσιν ἰδιόμελον τὸ		οἱ ψάλλται πρῶτον τὸ	12
		ἰδιόμελον τὸ	13
Πνευματικῶς ἡμᾶς πισ-	ἄρχονται τὸ ἰδιόμελον	Προφητικῶς ἡμᾶς πισ-	14
τοί.	μετὰ μέλους οὕτως	τοί	15
	_____	_____	16
	_____	_____	17
	_____	_____	18
	_____	_____	19
	_____	_____	20
	_____	_____	21
	_____	_____	22
	_____	_____	23
	_____	_____	24
	_____	_____	25
	_____	_____	26
	_____	_____	27
	_____	_____	28
	_____	_____	29
	_____	_____	30
	_____	_____	31
	_____	_____	32
	_____	_____	33
	_____	_____	34
	_____	_____	35
	_____	_____	36
	_____	_____	37
	_____	_____	38
	_____	_____	39
	_____	_____	40
	_____	_____	41
	_____	_____	42
	_____	_____	42a
	_____	_____	43
	_____	_____	44
	_____	_____	45
	_____	_____	46
	_____	_____	47

## LITURGICAL DRAMA IN BYZANTIUM AND RUSSIA 379

[illegible]

\* After μή the Athens MS reads διασκεδάσης τὴν διαθήκην σου καὶ μή (ed.).

IVIRON	ATHENS	SINAI	Lines
ένα	ἽΟ ὑπερύμνητος καὶ		109
	ὑπερυψούμενος εἰς τοὺς		110
πλ.δ' Εὐλογητὸς εἶ	αἰῶνας. Εὐλογητὸς εἶ		111
ὁ Θεὸς ὁ δι' ἀγγέλου	Κύριε σῶσον ἡμᾶς.		112
τοὺς παῖδας ἐκ φλογὸς	Καὶ οἱ παῖδες τὸ αὐτό.		113
διασώσας, καὶ τὴν βρον-	Τοῦτο γὰρ ἔστι κρείττον		114
τῶσαν κάμινον μεταβαλὼν	εἰς τοὺς παῖδας διὰ τὴν		115
εἰς δρόσον. Εὐλογητὸς	φωνήν αὐτῶν.		116
εἶ Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς τῶν			117
πατέρων ἡμῶν.			118
στίχος πλ.δ'.			119
Καὶ ἐξετίναξε τὴν φλόγα			120
τοῦ πυρὸς ἐκ τῆς καμίνου			121
[ὡς] πνεῦμα δρόσου			122
διασπρίζον.			123
Τῶν ἁγίων.			124
Ἔτερος στίχος πλ.δ'.			125
Τότε οἱ τρεῖς ὡς ἐξ			126
ἐνὸς στόματος ὕμνουν,			127
[ἐβόουν] καὶ ἐδόξαζον			128
τὸν Θεὸν ἐν τῇ κα-			129
μίνῳ λέγοντες [πλ.δ']			130
Εὐλογητὸς εἶ ὁ Θεός.			131
ψάλλονται οὖν καὶ οἱ		λέγουσι δὲ οἱ ψάλται	132
λοιποὶ στίχοι εἰς		διὰ μέσον καὶ ἡχίσματα	133
αὐτὸ τὸ μέλος, καὶ		εἰς ἡχὸν πλάγιον δ'	134
μετὰ τὸ τέλος αὐτῶν		λέγουσι καὶ καλοφωνικὰ	135
εὐθὺς ἡχίζει πάλιν ὁ		ᾠσματικὰ ἀπὸ τὰς ᾠδῆς πλ.δ'.	136
δομέστικος εἶτα λέγει			137
ᾠσματικόν, καὶ εὐθὺς			138
ἄρχεται ἡ ᾠδὴ στί-	εἶτα ἄρ-		139
χος πλ.δ'	χονται τὴν ἡ' ᾠδὴν		140
Εὐλογεῖτε πάντα τὰ	οὕτως πλ.δ'		141
ἔργα Κυρίου τὸν Κύ-			142
ριον			143
πλ.δ' Τὸν Κύριον ὕμ-			144
νεῖτε καὶ ὕμνεῖτε τὸν			145
Κύριον τὰ ἔργα, ὕμνεῖτε			146
εὐλογεῖτε καὶ ὑπερ-			147
υψοῦτε αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς			148
αἰῶνας.			149
ΛΕΓΕ Πάντα τὰ ἔργα,			150
τὸν Κύριον τὰ ἔργα			151
ὕμνεῖτε, εὐλογεῖτε καὶ			152
ὑπερυψοῦτε αὐτὸν εἰς			153
τοὺς αἰῶνας.			154
Εὐλογεῖτε.			155
Τοῦτου δὲ ψαλλομένου	ψαλλομένου δὲ τούτου	καὶ ψάλλεται τοῦτο εἰς	156
χορεύουσιν οἱ παῖδες	οἱ παῖδες χορεύουσιν	ὀλην τὴν ἡ' ᾠδὴν.	157
ἐντὸς τῆς καμίνου, ἐκ-	ἐντὸς τῆς καμίνου ἐκτείνουσι		158
τείνουσι τὰς χεῖρας	καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ὡς εἰς		159
καὶ τὰ ὄμματα ἄνω.	προσευχὴν ἱστάμενοι καὶ		160
	τὰ ὄμματα πρὸς τὸν οὐρα-		161
	νὸν ῥέπουσι. καὶ πάλιν		162
Ὅτε δὲ	ἄρχονται τοὺς στίχους. Οἱ		163
φθάσῃ τὸ μέσον τῆς	ψάλται δὲ ψάλλουσιν εἰς		164
ᾠδῆς εὐθὺς[πάλιν]	ἕκαστος ὅσα καὶ βούλεται.		165
ἡχίζει ὁ δομέστικος,	Εὐλογεῖτε Ἀνανία, Ἀζαρία,		166
εἶτα ὁ ἕτερος χορὸς	Μισαήλ τὸν Κύριον. Οἱ δο-		167
ἡχημα καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα	μέστικοι, οἱ παῖδες ὕμνου-		168
[λέγει] ᾠσματικόν. Εἶτα	μεν, εὐλογοῦμεν, προσκυνοῦ-		169
ψάλλεται τὸ ἐπίλοιπον	μεν τὸν Κύριον. Καὶ προσ-		170
τῆς ᾠδῆς.	κυνοῦσι λέγοντες Τῶν		171

# LITURGICAL DRAMA IN BYZANTIUM AND RUSSIA 381

IVIRON	ATHENS	SINAI	Lines
	ἀγίων σου		172
	Εὐλογεῖτε ἀπόστολοι,		173
	προφῆται καὶ μάρτυρες		174
	Κυρίου τὸν Κύριον.		175
	[οἱ δομέστικοι]		176
	Εὐλογητὸς εἰ Κύριε		177
	σῶσον ἡμᾶς.		178
	Καὶ πάλιν οἱ παῖδες τό		179
	ὕμνουμέν, εὐλογοῦμέν.		180
	Καὶ προσκυνοῦσι λέγοντες		181
	καὶ τῶν ἀγίων σου.		182
	Εὐλογοῦμέν Πατέρα, Υἱὸν		183
	καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα τὸν Κύριον.		184
	Καὶ προσκυνοῦσι καὶ		185
	τὰς χεῖρας ἐκτείνουσι		186
	καὶ χορεύοντες ψάλλουσι		187
	τὸν Κύριον ὑμνεῖτε καὶ		188
	ὑπερυψοῦτε[οἱ δομέστικοι]		189
	καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς		190
	τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.		191
	Ἀμήν.		192
	τὸν Κύριον ὑμνεῖτε καὶ		193
	ὑπερυψοῦτε.		194
Καὶ μετὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς	Εἶτα πάλιν οἱ δομέστικοι	εἶτα τὸν εἰρμόν	195
ᾠδῆς εὐθύς τό	γεγονωτέρᾳ φωνῇ τό		196
ὕμνουμέν, εὐλογοῦμέν,	Αἰνοῦμέν, εὐλογοῦμέν	Φλόγα δροσίλυσαν ὁσίους.	197
προσκυνοῦμέν. . .	προσκυνοῦμέν τὸν Κύριον.	καὶ τό	198
Σοὶ τῷ παντουργῷ. . .	Σοὶ τῷ παντουργῷ ἐν τῇ	Σοὶ τῷ παντουργῷ. . .	199
	καμίνῳ		200
	λέγομεν δὲ καὶ τοὺς		201
	εἰρμούς τούτους		202
Φλόγα δροσίλυσαν	ἤχ.α' Φλόγα δροσίλυσαν	καὶ τό	203
ὁσίους. . .	ὁσίους. . .	Ἑπταπλάσιου. . .	204
		καὶ ἕτερα ὅμοια.	205
	ὁ αὐτὸς[ἤχος]		206
	τὸν ἐν φλογὶ πυρὸς. . .		207
	ἕτερος, ἤχ.β'		208
	ἰνδάλματος χρυσοῦ. . .		209
	ἕτερος, ἤχ.γ'		210
	τὸν ἐν φλογὶ τοῖς παισί. . .		211
	καὶ ἕτερος ἤχος πλ.δ'		212
Εὐλογεῖτε παῖδες. . .	Εὐλογεῖτε παῖδες τῆς		213
	Τριάδος. . .		214
Νικηταὶ τυράννου. . .			215
εἶτα ἄρχεται ἡ λει-	εἶτα ἡ θεία λειτουργία	καὶ εὐθύς ἡ θεία λει-	216
τουργία.	καὶ ἀπόλυσις.	τουργία.	217

## COMMENTARY:

*Lines 1-5:* The published version of the text in *L* (see *supra*, note 21) does not indicate whether it has the same title as *I*. The only title, as given by Lavriotis, before line 6 of the text where *L* starts, consists of the word Διάταξις.

*Lines 9-10:* Bracketed text in the column for *I* appears only in *L*, not in *I*.

*Line 10:* MS *S* starts only from the point indicated.

*Line 23:* Bracketed text in *S* is missing in the MS.

*Line 32:* *L* reads: Ποῖημα κυροῦ Ζένη τοῦ Κορώνη, ἤχ. πλ. β'. The editor of the text of *L*, Lavriotis, seems to have misread the indication for the mode, since, throughout the text, wherever all other manuscripts have an indication for Mode IV Plagal, he lists Mode II Plagal.

*Line 38:* *L* does not have this line, which appears in *I*.

*Lines 43–56:* *S* follows *A* with one exception, in line 48. In that place *S* contains the text which is identical to lines 33–37 in *A*. MS *A*, however, has only the incipit of the refrain in line 48, as it does in lines 52 and 57.

*Line 46:* The bracketed text in the column for *I* is missing in that MS. It appears only in *L* and clearly indicates the insertion of the refrain between the singing of verses.

*Lines 57–59 in S:* The word πατέρων contains a prolongation on the last syllable by means of a repeated insertion -χω-.

*Line 61:* *L* reads ἀπήχημα πλ. β' (sic). There is a slight reshuffling of lines in *L* at this point. *Lines 62–66* do not follow immediately after line 61 but take the place of line 70 in this table, which has been left blank for this purpose in the column for *I*.

*Lines 68–69:* *L* has τὸν στίχον.

*Line 71:* The text in *L* agrees with *A*.

*Line 72:* *L* has σχήματος.

*Lines 78–79:* Trempeles in his edition of the text in *A* (see *supra*, note 18) reads: λέγουσι καὶ οἱ τρεῖς παῖδες τοὺς στίχους. On the basis of a microfilm of pertinent folios from *A* this writer cannot find Trempeles' reading at this point and offers his own reading in the column for *A*.

*Line 79:* *L* has λέγεται.

*Lines 82–84:* *A* has the same feature noted for *S* in lines 57–59.

*Lines 86–87* are missing in *L* at this place.

*Line 97* is left blank in all three manuscripts. At this point *L* has: καταβιβάζουσι τὸν ἄγγελον λευκὰ ἐνδεδυμένον μετὰ ὥραριου πορφυροῦ καὶ ψάλλουσι.

*Line 98:* *L* has ποίημα κύρ Ζ τοῦ κορώνη.

*Line 99:* The bracketed word in *I* is missing in all other manuscripts.

*Lines 106–107:* *L* omits λαμπαδαρίου.

*Line 110:* *I* at this point repeats the text of lines 93–96 before proceeding with line 111.

*Line 119:* *L* has εἶτα ὁ στίχος.

*Line 122:* The bracketed word is missing in *L*.

*Line 124:* *L* has τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων εὐλογητὸς εἰ ὁ Θεός.

*Lines 132–133:* *L* has ἡ λοιπὴ στιχολογία . . .

*Line 137:* *L* has λέγεται.

*Line 138* *L* omits: εὐθὺς.

*Lines 145–146:* *L* omits καὶ ὑμνεῖτε τὸν κύριον.

*Lines 150–155* are omitted in *L*.

*Line 164:* The bracketed word in *I* is missing in *L*.

*Line 166:* In *A*, above, the text of line 166 there is a superscription οἱ παῖδες.

*Line 168:* The bracketed word in *I* is missing in *L*.

*Line 169:* *L* has τὰ ἐπίλοιπα.

*Line 176:* The bracketed text in *A* is written in the margin.

*Lines 183–184:* In the margin of *A* there is a note: οἱ παῖδες.

*Line 189:* The bracketed text in *A* is written in the margin.

*Line 197:* *S* has the incipit of a hirmos for ode 8. This hirmos can be found in musical manuscripts of the hirmologion as, for instance, in the facsimile of Iviron 470, fol. 4<sup>r</sup> (*Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, Main Series, II [Copenhagen, 1938]). There this hirmos is in a kanon attributed to John the Monk and assigned for the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin. For a transcription into modern notation see Carsten Høeg, *The Hymns of the Hirmologium*, pt. I (*Mon. Mus. Byz.*, Series *Subsidia*, VI [Copenhagen, 1952], p. 50).

*Line 199:* This is the incipit of a hirmos for ode 8 in the First Plagal Mode. See the facsimile of Iviron 470, fol. 82<sup>v</sup> and its transcription in Høeg, *op. cit.*, pp. 152–154, where a comparative chart of the neumatic notation for this hirmos is drawn on the basis of several manuscript hirmologia. The kanon (no. 1 in Mode I Plagal) is ascribed to John the Monk.

*Line 203:* *I* and *A* have the incipit discussed *supra*, line 197. Whether *I* contains the full text of the hirmoi or only incipits cannot be determined on the basis of the published version. *A* does contain the full text for this and the following 4 hirmi which has been omitted from our table.

## LITURGICAL DRAMA IN BYZANTIUM AND RUSSIA 383

*Line 204:* S has the incipit of a hirmos for ode 8 in Mode IV Plagal. Cf. Iviron 470, fol. 129<sup>v</sup>, kanon no. 1. No published transcription is available.

*Line 206:* The bracketed word is this writer's emendation.

*Line 207:* This is a hirmos for ode 8 in Mode I. Cf. Iviron 470, fol. 5<sup>r</sup>, kanon no. 5. See also Høeg, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

*Line 209:* This is a hirmos for ode 8 in Mode II. Cf. Iviron 470, fol. 23<sup>r</sup>, kanon no. 2. The text in A omits the last line of this hirmos, compared to the version in S. Eustratiades' Εἰρμολόγιον (Chennevières-sur-Marne, 1932), p. 35, where this hirmos is listed as an alternate in kanon no. 47.

*Line 211:* This is a hirmos for ode 8 in Mode III. Cf. Iviron 470, fol. 54<sup>r</sup> (in the manuscript it is erroneously indicated as ode 7!), kanon 16.

*Line 213:* This is a hirmos for ode 8 in Mode IV Plagal. Cf. Iviron 470, fol. 134<sup>v</sup>, kanon 8, for the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross.

*Line 215:* This is a hirmos for ode 8 in Mode IV Plagal. Cf. Iviron 470, fol. 131<sup>r</sup>, kanon 3.

### APPENDIX II

As an illustration of the intricate preparations for the staging of the *Play of the Furnace* in Russia, select excerpts from various sources have been assembled in this appendix. A seldom quoted list of data appears in *Materialy dlia istorii arkheologii i statistiki Moskovskikh Tserkveĭ*, assembled from expense accounts by V. I. Kholmogorov and G. I. Kholmogorov, under the guidance of I. E. Zabiĕlin (Moscow, 1884). Most of the data on the *Play of the Furnace*, as performed in the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Virgin (Uspenskiĭ Sobor) in the Moscow Kremlin, are conveniently assembled in one place (cols. 53–60) and that group of data was reproduced by Spitsin in his study. Some additional data from the same volume, not quoted by other Russian scholars, is presented here by way of background information. Since in the big fire of the cathedral in 1626 a number of items needed for the services was destroyed, it is interesting to note the careful listing of all the new acquisitions made from that year onward.<sup>78</sup>

Thus, on October 1, 7135 (i.e. 1626), a sum was given to three carpenters, blacksmiths, and their assistants as food allowance for the time when they were constructing a furnace for the *Play of the Furnace*. Carpenters are also mentioned to have worked on October 2 and 9.

On October 9 of the same year, a guard was dispatched to purchase six pounds of red dye,<sup>79</sup> and on the same day the same guard bought some glue made from cow hide.

On October 26, the blacksmith received cash to purchase four sticks of iron from which he was to make twenty-one special hooks, four "closed" hooks and six of a different kind. His apprentice, who was helping with the hammering, is also listed as having received a food allowance.

On October 27, a guard was sent to buy soap to launder the vestments which the children wore for the play.

On November 24, ten arshins<sup>80</sup> of red cloth called "letchina" were purchased and the price listed. From this cloth the costumes of the Chaldeans were made.

On the same day another blacksmith was given twenty sticks of iron from the patriarchal store, out of which he was ordered to make two hundred candlesticks for the furnace. For this work he was also given cash for seven bags of coal at a specified price.

On the same day two arshins of green dyed cloth was purchased, for making some sort of shoulder covers, and two arshins of plain linen for pockets were also acquired.

<sup>78</sup> For the translation of technical terms and the names of various types of cloth the following dictionaries were consulted: I. I. Sreznevskii, *Materialy dlia slovariā drevnerusskogo iazyka*, I–III and Appendix (new reprint) (Moscow, 1958); A. G. Preobrazhenskii, *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka* (new reprint) (Moscow, 1958); and, most useful of all, Max Vasmer's *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I–III (Heidelberg, 1953–1958).

<sup>79</sup> The Russian pound seems to have been lighter than the current pound in use in the West. It weighed 409,512 grams. Cf. N. V. Ustiugov, "Ocherk drevnerusskoĭ metrologii," *Istoricheskie Zapiski*, XIX (1946), p. 309.

<sup>80</sup> One arshin equalled 71,12 cm. or about 2 feet 4 inches. Cf. Ustiugov, p. 320.

On November 27, ten ermine furs, needed for the lower hems of the children's caps, were purchased from a merchant. Two rabbit furs were also acquired at a slightly lower price.

On November 28, a tinker received payment for repairing thirteen powder horns and for making seven new ones. A special payment was made for the lead he had used. The same man affixed crosses on the children's caps.

On the same day a guard was sent to buy "rustling gold" for gilding the children's caps.

On December 1, payment was made to a painter for having gilded the children's caps, with an allowance for gold, silver, and drying oil used, and for a food allowance of four days.

On December 2, stag-horn moss-powder was purchased, the quantity being one pud and thirty-four grivenky.<sup>81</sup>

On December 10, the three children, Ivashko Konstantinov, Ianko L'vov and Andriushka Prokofiev, each received an allowance for shoes besides a food allowance for the forthcoming seven days. The two Chaldeans, Sava Vasilev and Iakunia, received also an allowance for shoes and for gloves (an interesting precautionary measure for handling moss-powder). On the same day a payment was given to a painter for having made two wide belts with metal buckles for the Chaldeans and for having painted them.

On December 13, another purchase of moss-powder.

On December 16, payment to the singer Andrei Kuzmin for wood and candles used in the previous year and for teaching the children their part in the *Play of the Furnace*.

On the same day a carpenter was paid for setting up the furnace in the church.

On December 17, a special allowance to the sexton, the widowed priest Bogdan. He sat underneath the furnace during the performance.

On the same day a large payment to the "furnace master" for having made a new furnace for the play.

These entries for one single year are not complete since in another part of the expense accounts of the same cathedral there is an item, under December 16, stating that a man was sent to buy some rope for the lowering of the angel (Kholmogorovs, col. 7). In addition, a bonus payment was distributed by the patriarch on Christmas Day and in the list of beneficiaries are listed his singers and "the three children" (*ibid.*, col. 1037). Not counting the children and the Chaldeans, there were some twenty-eight singers in the patriarchal service, as may be seen from a list compiled on September 20 of the same year, listing the salaries of the members of the patriarchal household.

An interesting inventory compiled seven years later lists under the heading *Play of the Furnace* the following vestments accounted for and designated for use on that occasion (*ibid.*, col. 58):

Three sticharia for children, made of fine cotton, plain color. On each of them the shoulder part has a special cover made of shining, silky, soft cloth with gold and some sort of fringe. On the vestments there were red and black colored bands made of silk. Three caps with a wooden ball and cross atop, all gilded. The frame of these caps was made of German iron, gilded and covered on the edges with ermine.

Two linen towel-like pieces, one of which is listed as being old, to be worn by the children.

A different set of old sticharia with bands.

Two old copper caps with frames of German iron.

Four old robes for the Chaldeans, of red cloth.

Three old robes for Chaldeans, of red cloth, eaten by moths. Two Chaldean caps.

Three old sticharia of linen, one with a velvet cassock, one of printed silk, and another of cotton.

One case with candlesticks for the furnace.

One old linen sticharion with a shoulder-cover of plain color made of rough silk, in bad condition.

One old sticharion made of silk imported from Bukhara, with a shoulder-cover made of green figured (?) velvet.

<sup>81</sup> One pud weighed 16,38 kilograms and contained forty "big" or 80 "small" grivenki. Cf. Ustiugov, pp. 344 ff. The quantity listed in the purchase amounted therefore to more than 63 lbs.



## LITURGICAL DRAMA IN BYZANTIUM AND RUSSIA 385

Earlier writers also mention an item not located by this writer, namely an inventory of the Uspenskiĭ Sobor for 1627, listing among other entries: "Two angels, painted on paper, that are lowered in the *Play of the Furnace*."<sup>82</sup>

There is an even more interesting description of the making of an angel, from Vologda in 1637. The relevant entry reads: "On the eighth day of December, two calf hides were bought for the sum of one rubl', six altyns and four dengi. Out of these hides the model of an archangel was cut, sewn, and glued. For the grinding and painting, a payment in the same amount was made to a painter."<sup>83</sup>

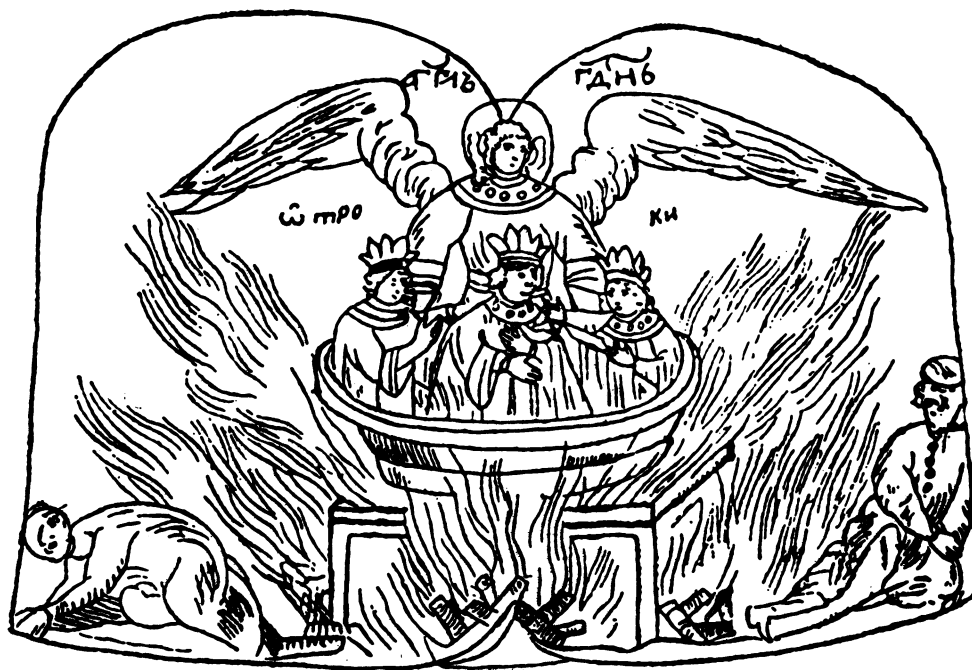
The above enumeration, selective as it is, illustrates with sufficient clarity the attention to detail given to the presentation of this liturgical drama and the splendor with which it was performed in Russia.

<sup>82</sup> I. M. Snegirev, *Pamiātniki moskovskoi drevnosti*, (Moscow, 1842–1845), p. 52.

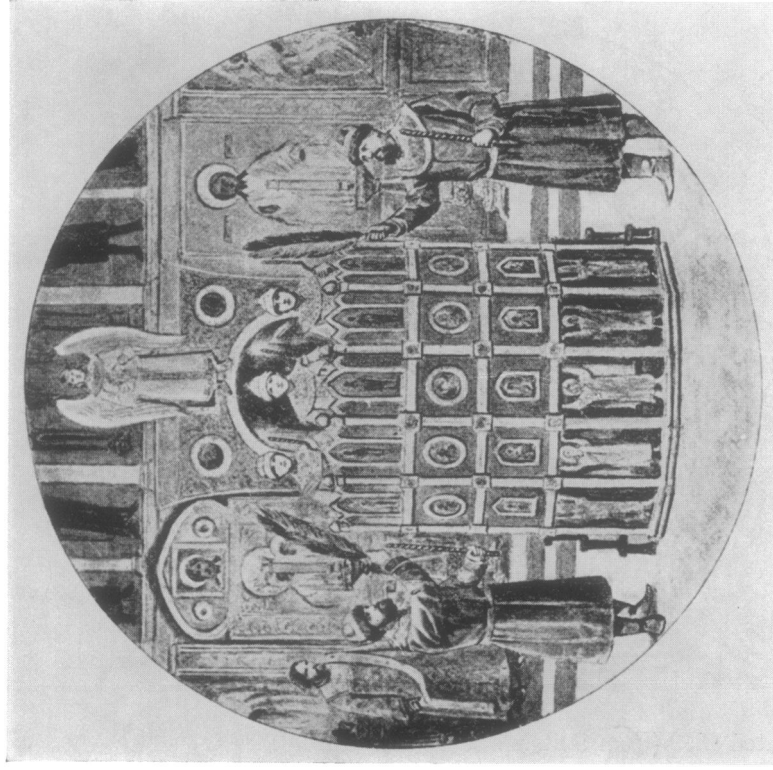
<sup>83</sup> N. I. Suvorov, "Arkheologicheskiĭ svĕdĕniĭ o chinĕ peshchnago dĕistviĭa," *Izvestiĭa Imp. Arkheol. Obshch.*, II (1861), col. 242.



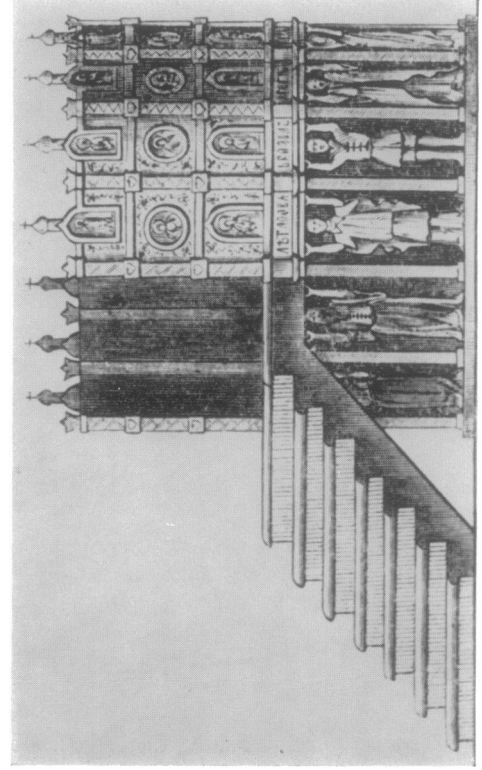
1. Mt. Athos, Lavra. MS A 165, fol. 325<sup>v</sup>



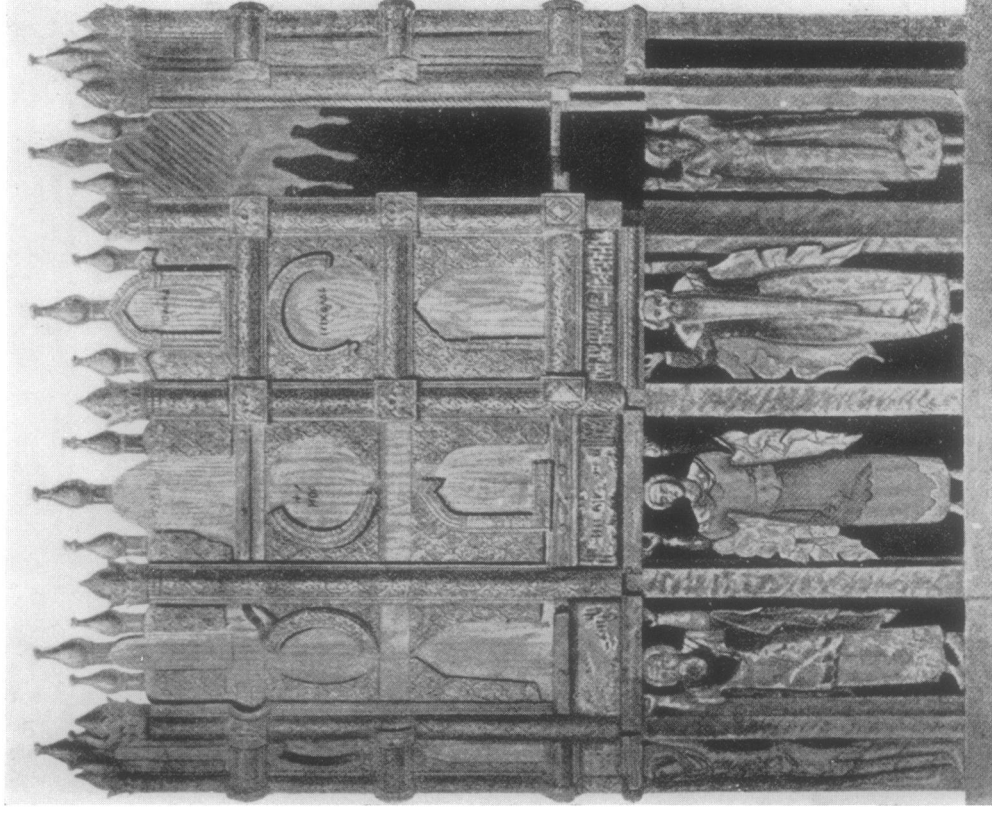
2. Pskov, Cathedral. Door Relief, dated 1659 (from Spitsin's study, see note 71)



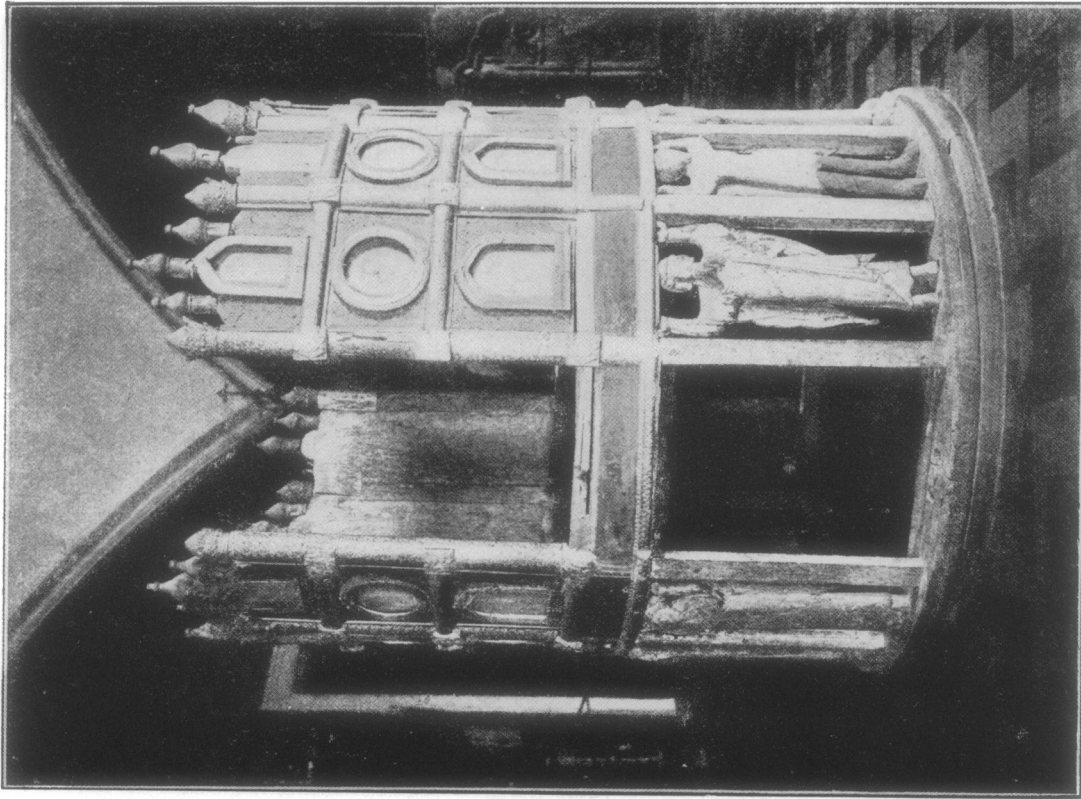
3. Modern Reconstruction of the Performance of the  
*Play of the Furnace* (see note 77)



4. Proposed Reconstruction of a Stairway Leading into  
the Furnace (from Artleben, see note 72)

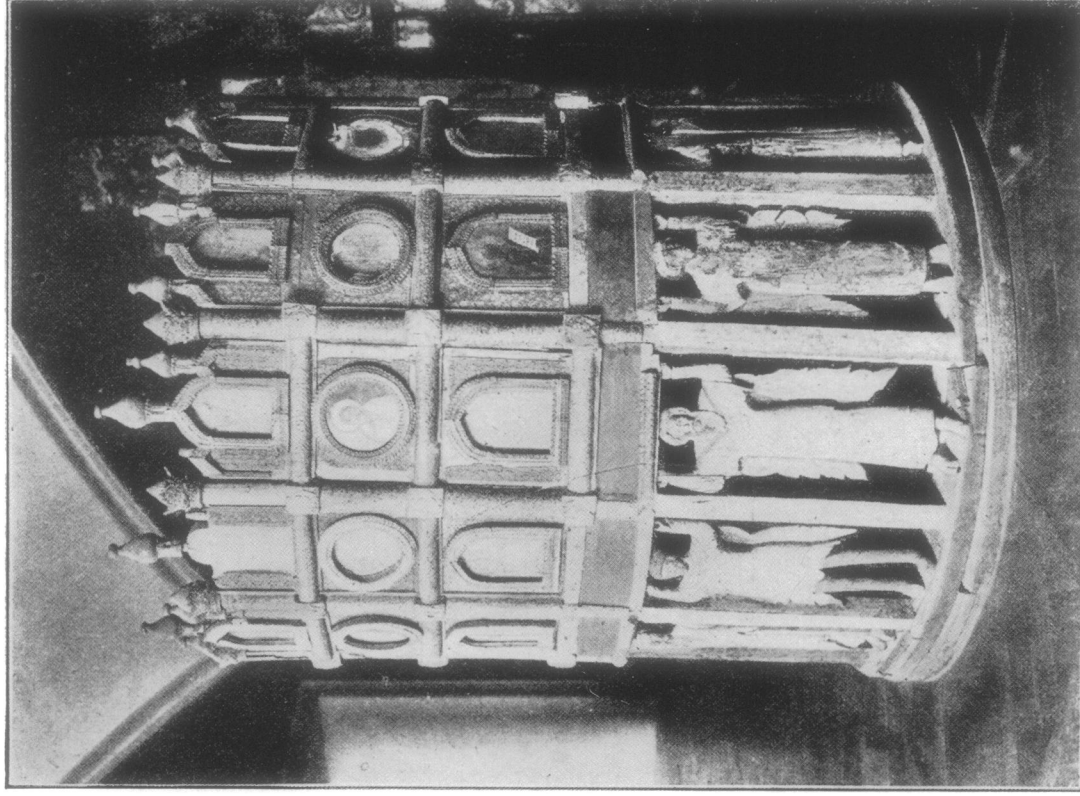


5. The Furnace from the Novgorod Cathedral (from *Drevnosti  
Rossiiskago Gosudarstva*, 6, pl. 27)



6.

The Novgorod furnace, at present in the Russian Museum in Leningrad



7.